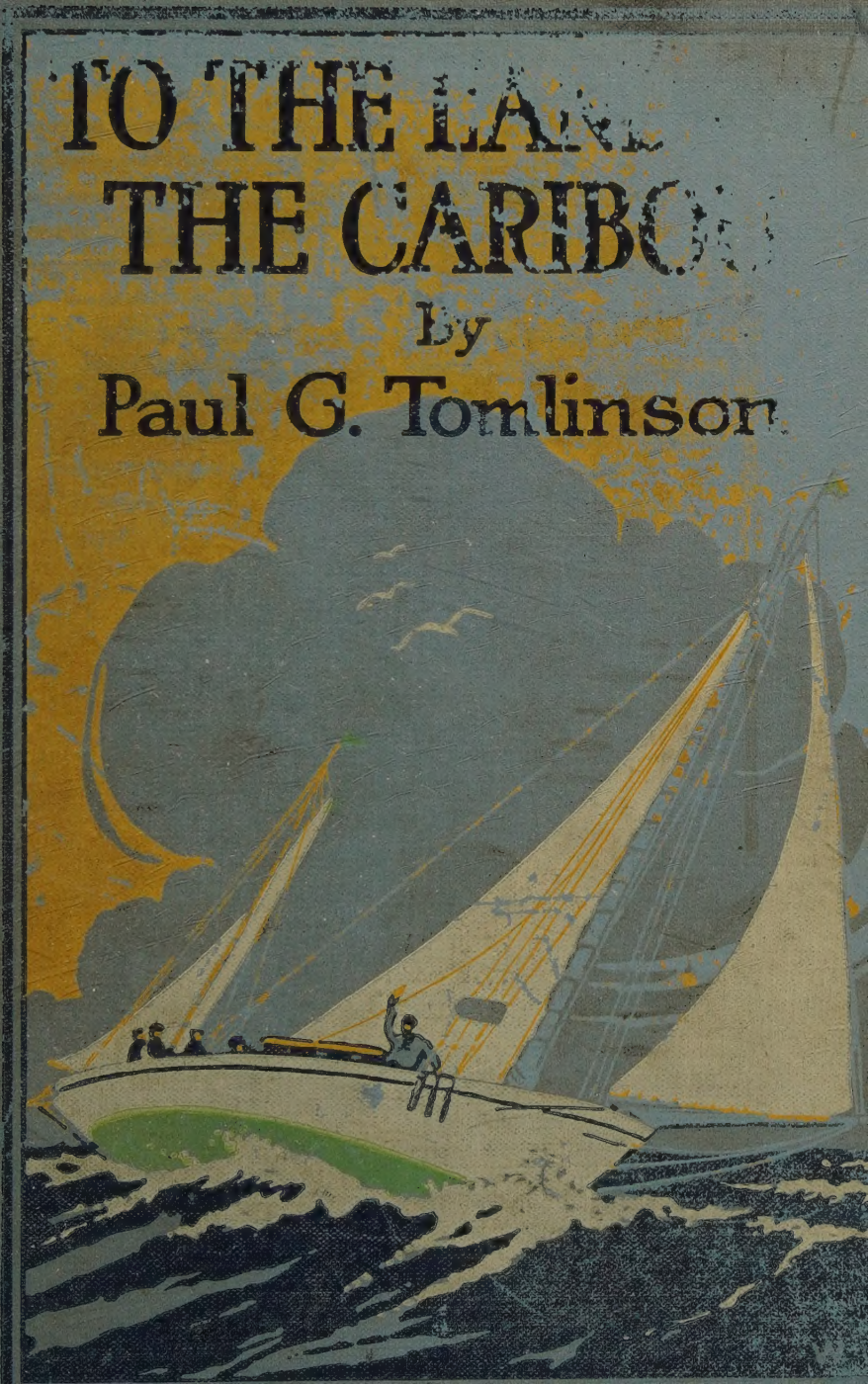
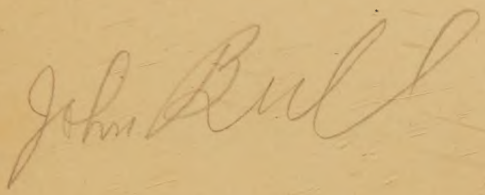
TO THE LAND OF THE CARIBOU

By

Paul G. Tomlinson





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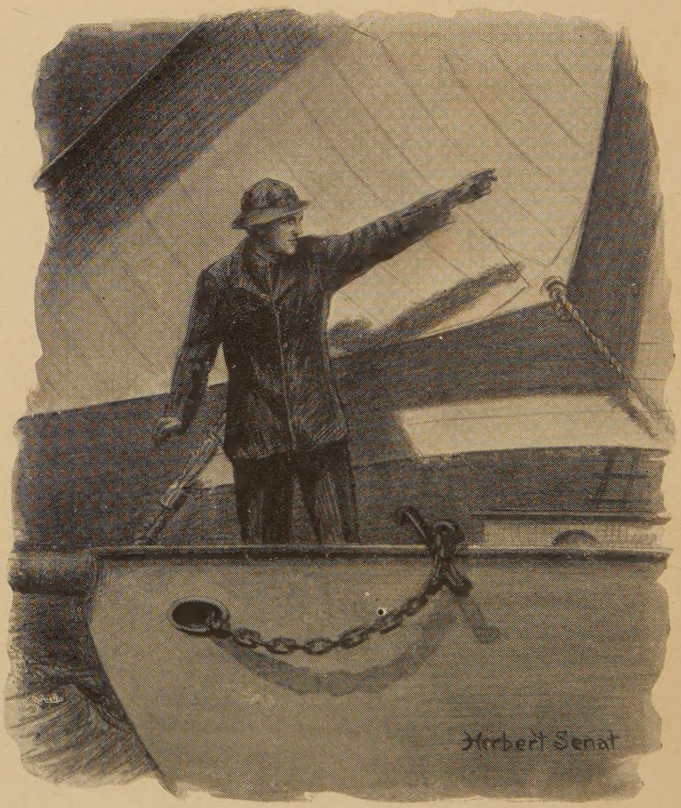

"Now the rest of you help me," ordered the skipper

TO THE LAND OF THE CARIBOU

THE ADVENTURES OF
FOUR CLASSMATES ON A CRUISE
TO LABRADOR

By
PAUL G. TOMLINSON

WITH EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS

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PREFACE

A FEW years ago a yawl was purchased by Princeton men as a gift to Dr. Grenfell, the well-known medical missionary. A crew was selected to sail the boat from New York to Labrador and present it to him for use in his work. This crew was made up of undergraduates, and the author was fortunate enough to be one of those who were chosen. The route selected on that trip is closely followed in this narrative, and the country is described as it impressed itself on our minds at that time. Many of the incidents and adventures related in the story are founded upon the actual experiences of the author during that cruise. They are true to life, though of necessity somewhat modified or changed in certain details. The wreck of the *Spray* in the story, for example, anticipated by only a year or so the actual fate that overtook the vessel.

PREFACE

"To the Land of the Caribou" is offered to those who may read it with the hope that they may enjoy the story of the adventures of the boys as here recorded. Certainly the real boys who took this cruise, and who hunted and fished along the way, enjoyed every bit of it.

PAUL G. TOMLINSON.

ELIZABETH, NEW JERSEY.

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TO THE LAND OF THE CARIBOU

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CHAPTER I

FOUR BOYS AND A SKIPPER

"EASE her off a bit, Tom! Steady! That'll do."

The *Spray*, in response to a turn of the wheel, bore away slowly and, with a fresh wind blowing dead astern, gathered headway and was soon rushing through the waters of Long Island Sound.

It was the last day in June. On board the *Spray* was a party of five people—four boys and a skipper. Tom Keene, who was at the wheel, Frederick, who was generally known among his friends as "Fred," Knowles, John Butler, and Frank Reed were classmates and close friends at college. They had just completed their freshman year and were about to spend the

summer together on board John Butler's trim yawl, the *Spray*.

They were bound on a cruise to Labrador, a region that had always appealed to them as a land of adventure. And all four boys were in pursuit of adventures. They knew little of Labrador or of the character of the waters over which they must sail to reach that barren and far-away land. This very fact had prompted John's father to send to St. John's, Newfoundland, for an experienced skipper who had sailed those seas and who knew something more about sailing than did his son and his three friends.

The boys insisted, however, that they had had ample experience in sailing a boat. As for finding their way, was there not an abundance of reliable charts to be had and was not the yawl equipped also with a model compass?

However, "Bud" Brown, in accordance with Mr. Butler's instructions, had arrived in New York from St. John's the last week in June and, as skipper, had taken command of the little craft.

For months before the sailing of the *Spray*, plans had been laid for the wonderful trip. A

tent had been purchased, guns and fishing-tackle were bought, and each boy had provided himself with a duffel-bag and clothing suitable for camping as well as for the long voyage. They had also secured pots and pans, trout flies, hunting-knives, and, in fact, everything they could think of that might be of use in hunting or fishing. To see their stock one might imagine that they intended to catch all the fish and shoot all the caribou and other game in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Their plan was to sail northward in a leisurely manner, stopping wherever they pleased, until finally they should land on the bleak shores of Labrador, the land of adventure.

So here they were at last, really started. Every one was in high spirits except the skipper. He was somewhat dubious concerning the ability of his crew, and, in addition, he was very "grouchy" because of an experience he had had in New York the preceding night.

"Why," he was telling Fred Knowles and John Butler, "I got off the train at the Grand Central Depot, and some hack driver came up to me and asks me do I want a cab. I ain't

never been to New York before, and I asks him where do Thirty-seventh Street be, and he says: 'Jump right in and I'll take you there.' So I jumped in and he charges me two dollars for driving me five blocks! That's what I call robbery. Yes, sir! That's just what it is—highway robbery! Think of charging a man two dollars for driving him five blocks!"

"You have to watch those New York hack drivers, all right, skipper," said Fred with a laugh. "But I guess they'll never catch you again that way, will they?"

"Not if I know myself!" replied the disgruntled sailor with a snort.

Just at this moment, at the top of the companionway, appeared a head, which proved to belong to Frank Reed. He was stripped to the waist, and in one hand he flourished a dish mop and in the other he was holding a tin pan.

"Hey, you, John!" he cried. "What do you think this is? Come down here and help me wash these dishes. This is your day on."

"Oh, I guess you're right," said John. "I'll be there in a second."

"Certainly, I'm right," replied Frank. "You

know we fixed it that as long as Tom is to be the cook of the crowd the rest of us will have to wash the dishes and get only one day in three off, too!"

"Ha!" chuckled Tom, who was sitting at the wheel. "I guess I've got the best job of all. I'd rather do all the cooking than wash dishes."

"I don't mind washing dishes," replied John; "at least, I don't think I do, for I've never tried it."

So saying, he disappeared down the companionway to join Frank, who already had returned to his task.

"He certainly is a fine young man," remarked the skipper to Tom.

"John certainly is," assented his friend. "He is one of the finest fellows that ever lived."

"You're right," chimed in Fred Knowles, who had just come back from the bow where he had been inspecting the jib.

"What do that stout young gentleman's name be?" asked Bud.

"You mean Frank Reed?" said Tom. "That's his name; and he is as full of fun as can be and is one of the best ever. He used

to furnish amusement for the whole house at college."

Tom Keene, the speaker, was six feet tall and muscular. He had played on his freshman football team the preceding autumn and was always in good physical condition, and proud of the fact.

Frank Reed, of whom he had just been speaking, was short and chubby. His chief athletic feats had been performed at the table, where he could defeat any one at any kind of an eating contest. His friends sometimes spoke of him as the "dinner-table athlete."

"You'd better let me take the wheel now," remarked the skipper, who had been casting an anxious eye toward the west. "It looks to me as if we might have a bit of a blow."

"The wind is fresher," remarked Tom, giving up his place to the skipper. "Do you think we are in for a squall?"

"You never can tell," replied Bud, shaking his head solemnly as he spoke. "But we must always be ready for anything. Run forward and slack away those stays a bit, will you?" he continued, addressing Fred Knowles.

At this point John and Frank appeared from below, their task with the dishes having been completed.

"Going to be a storm, is there, skip?" inquired Frank, looking at the pilot.

"I don't know, me son," replied that individual. "Not for quite a while, anyway."

"Let her come! What do we care?" said Frank as he danced a hornpipe on the cabin roof.

"What do you think of the *Spray*, skipper?" asked John. "Do you sail in boats like this around Newfoundland?"

"We do not," said Bud simply. "This is the smartest little boat I ever seen. Why, she's a regular yacht! Which one of you boys can run the kicker?"

"The what?" inquired John blankly.

"The engine—the 'kicker,' as we calls 'em."

"Oh," laughed John. "I'm the engineer, but you know we can make only about five miles an hour with the engine."

"Well, five miles an hour is not to be sneezed at some time when there ain't any wind," replied Bud with emphasis. "How long is this

boat? I never seen her before this morning, you know."

"Fifty feet over all, and forty on the waterline," replied John promptly.

"She's a daisy," the skipper remarked. "All finished in mahogany and with two staterooms and two bunks in the cabin! She must have been made for these waters."

"Yes, she was built to cruise on the Sound," agreed John, "but I guess she will make Labrador, won't she?"

"I guess she will," said Bud. "At least it won't be our fault if she doesn't."

The other boys were busy tidying up the cabin and getting their few clothes in order. Tom, the cook, was employed in the galley, while John and the skipper were talking on deck, John carrying out the occasional commands of the captain.

The wind was still dead astern and steadily becoming stronger, but as yet it was an easy matter for one person to steer and take charge of the whole boat. All the crew were on deck now except Tom, who was busy preparing the evening meal.

"I hope he can cook," remarked Bud soberly.

"Just wait till you taste his cooking!" replied Frank, who also was beginning to display a hungry look. "Hey, Tom!" he called, rising and going to the head of the companionway leading to the cabin, as he spoke: "Is dinner nearly ready?"

"I was just coming to call you," was the response from below.

"Come on, boys! Dinner's ready!" cried Frank joyously and quickly disappeared from sight.

"All go below and eat," said the skipper. "I'll steer until you get through, and then one of you can relieve me."

Without arguing, John and Fred joined their companions and the four boys speedily began to do ample justice to the meal which Tom had prepared. They were seated on camp-stools around a table which had been set up in the middle of the cabin. An oil-lamp was shedding a soft light from the adjoining shelf.

They ate and ate and were so busy in their occupation that they were not fully aware that the boat was beginning to rock quite violently

until the plates began to slide a little on the table.

"Say, it's beginning to get rough!" remarked Fred suddenly as a plate slid beyond his reach.

"I should say it was!" responded John.

At this moment they heard a sharp call from above and the voice of the skipper summoning them.

"Hurry out here! All of you!" he shouted. "We're in for a squall, and we're going to have it quick, too."

All four boys rushed on deck and one hasty glance at the water and another at the sky convinced them all that what the skipper had said was true.

CHAPTER II

IN PERIL

THE sky was inky-black, and as far as the boys could see the waves were capped with white and rapidly gaining in size and force.

The wind was blowing strongly and constantly increasing in power.

"We've got to take in that mainsail!" the skipper shouted as the boys appeared on deck. "One of you take this wheel and bring her up into the wind," he continued.

In response John sprang forward and seized the wheel.

"Now the rest of you help me," ordered the skipper. "Slack away that sheet! Lower the jigger a bit and ease the jib!" he shouted excitedly.

The three boys hastened to carry out his commands, but it was no easy matter for the young sailors to do so, for the *Spray* was now

pitching and tossing like a cork. The seas were breaking over the deck and the whistling of the ever-increasing wind added to the confusion. It was raining, making the foothold of every one on board very uncertain. The big boom on the mainsail was still swinging dangerously.

"Here, you, now! Grab those halyards and let her down easy!" commanded Bud. "You get the crotch for the boom!" he yelled to Fred. "When we get this sail in we've got to keep this boom still or she'll knock some one overboard."

The skipper clung to the sheet with all his strength in his endeavor to keep the boom steady. The sail flapped and crackled with every gust of wind that reached it.

"All ready up for'ard there?" called the skipper.

"All ready," came the reply from Tom and Frank, who were stationed one on each side of the mainmast with the ropes grasped firmly in their hands.

"Let her go, then! Easy now!"

Slowly the big sail was being let down and

desperately Fred was grasping the folds of canvas trying to keep them from lapping over the side into the water.

"Look out there, Fred!" shouted Tom. "Don't get swept overboard by that boom!"

"I'm all right!" came the quick reply.

The rain meanwhile had increased with the wind, and the *Spray*, in the trough of the waves, was rolled and pitched about almost like a stick of wood.

It was so dark by this time that it was impossible to distinguish any object as far away as the length of the boat. Only the frequent flashes of vivid lightning revealed what was going on.

In the momentary glimpses thus obtained the tense, white faces of the boys and the grizzled, set countenance of the skipper were seen for an instant. The excited crew hurried and stumbled, fastening ropes and gathering up canvas from the rain-soaked and slippery deck. The boom was swinging so that it was almost out of the question to hold it.

"Get up on the cabin and help steady that boom!" the skipper shouted. "Two of you

get on one side and one on the other! Don't let go, either!"

"Frank, you and Fred get on that side. I'll try to hold this!" cried Tom. There was nothing to hold on to and they crawled on all fours, at times, to get to the places assigned them.

"Look, Fred! See how she rolls! She's taking in water every time she strikes a heavy sea!" gasped Frank as, with increasing difficulty, the boys made their way along the deck.

"Never mind that!" was the reply. "She won't upset with a thirteen-ton lead keel to hold her up."

"Hurry up, there!" came a renewed call from the skipper.

"In a second," shouted Fred in response.

"Grab the sheet with both hands and hang on for all you're worth!" yelled Tom from the other side. "We've got to stop this swinging, and stop it quick!"

Frank and Fred at length had crawled to their places. Then they arose slowly and carefully prepared to seize the boom.

Just at that moment a huge wave and a heavy gust of wind together struck the opposite

side of the *Spray*. The boom swung viciously toward Fred and Frank, dragging Tom with it, and almost lifting the skipper from his feet.

Frank, who was nearest the stern of the boat, received the full force of the boom squarely upon his chest. A blinding flash of lightning, an instant later, showed Tom and Fred sprawled upon the deck, tangled up in canvas and rigging, but Frank was nowhere to be seen.

CHAPTER III

A FRESH ALARM

"FRANK'S overboard!" shrieked John, who from his position at the wheel was the one best enabled to see what had occurred.

"We've got to get this boom in the crotch, anyway!" shouted the skipper. "We can't do anything with it swinging the way it is. You two run up for'ard and keep your eyes peeled for Frank!" he shouted to Tom and Fred. "Get a rope, too! And lay hold on that there round life-preserver, too!"

As the boom swung back, the skipper grasped it and, during the moment of quiet that always comes after a big wave has broken, managed to slip it firmly into place again. At least it could do no more damage for the present.

All these events had taken place in much less time than it takes to describe them. John had tried to keep the boat in as nearly the same spot

as he was able, and Fred and Tom instantly were ready with a rope and a life-preserver.

The wind and waves were still beating furiously upon the *Spray*. All on board was in confusion. When the boys at last realized that Frank was overboard, they were almost frantic.

"Watch for his head!" called John in his excitement.

"But we can't see anything, except when there is a flash of lightning," protested Tom from the bow.

"Give me the wheel, son," Bud shouted to John. "You go help look for your mate and I'll try to bring the boat back to where she was. Go astern and look there," said the skipper.

Without delay John eagerly sprang to the stern and peered out into the hissing waters of the Sound. A terrible fear was in his heart, and the thought that Frank was overboard and perhaps drowned by this time seemed more than he could bear. He peered feverishly into the black waters, praying for a flash of lightning that would enable him to see more clearly.

At last the dazzling flash came. There, about ten feet astern of the boat, was Frank clinging

to a rope with both hands. The other end of the rope was fastened to some part of the *Spray*. The waves were continuously breaking over him and his white face showed that he was almost exhausted.

"Here he is! Here he is!" John shouted in his loudest tones. "Here he is! Here he is! I see him! Quick! Quick! Everybody come here and help me!"

Fred and Tom lost no time in obeying, and quickly joined John at his post.

"Where is he? I don't see him," both shouted together.

"He's right there and he's got hold of a rope!" cried John as he pointed to the spot where last he had seen his friend.

"Perhaps the end of the sheet went overboard with him," suggested Tom. "I'll go see."

"There it is, right in front of you!" the skipper shouted, pointing to the rope as Tom rushed stumblingly toward him.

"Yes, it's overboard!" cried Tom. "One of you fellows come help me!"

"Carefully, now, and pull in slowly," warned

John. "He's probably pretty weak by this time and we must be very careful."

Crouched on the stern of the boat, the boys slowly and anxiously began to haul in their line. The next flash showed Frank almost directly under the stern of the yawl, grasping the other end of their rope. The struggling boy called to them, but the wind carried his voice away and his words could not be distinguished.

"When the next wave raises him up I'll grab him," said Tom. "The old boat is certainly rolling, though, and it won't be an easy thing to get him."

"You keep hold of the rope, Fred, and I'll hold on to Tom's legs so that he can't fall overboard," called John.

Tom leaned dangerously far out over the water, and as the next wave swept toward them he reached forth and seized Frank by his hair—the first thing he could get hold of.

"I've got him, Fred!" he cried. "Let go the rope and help me to lift him on board."

Slowly the boys raised their companion and then steadily pulled him on board the *Spray*. Frank lay where his companions placed him on

the deck, and no one at first could determine whether he was conscious or not, for the rescued boy did not stir.

A vivid flash at that moment lighted up the whole sky and the pallid face of Frank was seen for an instant by his three scared companions. A faint almost sickly smile appeared upon his face.

"You certainly pulled my hair, Tom," he said; and then the exhausted boy fainted.

"We must get him into a bunk the first thing we do!" exclaimed Tom, "or he'll freeze out here! Feel how cold his hands are."

"You two stay here with him a second and I'll run down into the cabin and pull everything out of one of the bunks so that you can put him in there," said Fred.

The storm was beginning to abate a little by this time, and the lightning and the thunder seemed to be farther away. The wind, too, had died down, though the water was still as rough as before.

They were now scudding before the wind with only the jib and jigger set. The *Spray* still darted forward like a race-horse, however,

and had covered many miles since the boys had set sail in the morning.

"John, you take hold of Frank's feet and I'll grab him under the arms," said Tom. "Don't fall down with him, though! We must be careful, with the boat pitching and rolling the way she is."

"All right, Tom. I've got him," replied John as he took one of Frank's chubby ankles in each hand.

They were just about to lift their burden and start toward the cabin, when the voice of Fred was heard from the top of the companionway.

"Tom! Bud! John!" he shouted in evident alarm. "Come, quick! The boat is on fire and the whole cabin is full of smoke!"

CHAPTER IV

IN THE HARBOR

"QUICK! Put Frank right down here on the deck!" cried Tom. "We've got to do it!" he added sharply as his companions hesitated.

The boys hastily dropped their burden and rushed to the cabin.

"This here boat is a Jonah!" the captain exclaimed excitedly as they darted past him.

"Fred, where are you?" yelled both Tom and John as they started down the cabin stairs into the thick smoke.

"Over here," came the reply. "The lamp has upset and is on fire! Get a pail of water and soak it all over this shelf!" he continued excitedly.

John hastened to obey the suggestion, while Tom and Fred seized the cloth that covered the wooden shelf.

"The smoke almost blinds me," gasped Fred as he tugged at the cloth to pull it down from its place.

"Take that out and throw it overboard," ordered Tom. "I'll attend to the lamp."

Fred, with the unburned end of the cloth in his hand, made for the companionway, the other end blazing and smoking as he ran. At the top of the stairs he ran head foremost into John, who was coming down with a bucket of water, and sent him sprawling into the cockpit. The bucket was knocked from his hands and sent spinning, its contents flying out and landing squarely on poor Frank, who was still stretched out upon his back.

"Sorry, John, but I can't help it!" shouted Fred as he tossed his burning bundle over the side of the yawl into the sea.

At that moment the blazing lamp came shooting out of the companionway and landed with a hiss in the waves.

"The fire is out!" said Tom, appearing from below. "It's lucky we found it when we did, though!"

"It was more smoke than anything, I guess,"

said John as he slowly arose from the place where Fred's push had sent him.

"Yes, and the cabin will smell smoky all summer now," growled the skipper, who had almost lost his temper because of all the misfortunes that had happened to them in the last hour. "Now, go see to your sick friend," he continued. "You don't want to forget him."

The boys turned at once to Frank, who by this time had regained consciousness and was trying to sit up.

"That bucket of water he got in the face brought him 'round," said Bud.

"Well, that's the only lucky thing that has happened to us to-day, then," remarked Fred. "I hope I didn't hurt you, John."

"Oh, my, no!"

"How do you feel, Frank?" they all inquired at once.

"Feel sort of rocky," he replied.

"Well, you have a good excuse," remarked Tom. "Just wait a second and we'll get you below and into a dry bunk."

"Run down and open the port-holes, Fred!"

suggested John. "We've got to get that smoke out of the cabin."

Half carrying Frank, the boys started toward the cabin.

"I feel sort of weak," remarked the helpless boy. "What happened to me, anyway?"

"The boom hit you," explained Tom.

"All I remember is that I got an awful blow in the chest, and the next thing I knew I was in the water hanging on to that rope. What was that rope, anyway?"

"It was the end of the sheet that had fallen overboard," said John. "And it's pretty lucky for you that it was overboard, too!"

"I should say it was," said Frank.

The smoke was nearly all out of the cabin now, and Frank was being rubbed with a coarse towel and placed between some warm, dry blankets.

"I'll attend to him," said John. "You two had better go out and see if you can do anything for the skipper."

"Get some of this here stuff cleared out of the way!" ordered Bud as the boys appeared on deck. "I never see such a mess!"

"Where are we now, skipper?" asked Tom as he set to work.

"We're about five miles from New London."

"We must have made good time, then, to-day," said Fred.

"We've made good time, but I can't say I've had a good time," the skipper growled in reply. "Say," he continued, "I haven't had anything to eat to-night. As soon as you get this deck shipshape, one of you take the wheel. I've got to eat once in a while, you know."

"All right, skipper. I'll relieve you now," said Tom promptly.

"Keep her pointed for that lighthouse you see dead ahead," directed Bud. "And, say," he continued, "is there anything to eat down below?"

"I guess there is," said Tom. "You can find something, I'm sure."

The skipper disappeared below, while Fred joined Tom, and naturally the two boys began to talk over the exciting events of the day.

"If every day is as thrilling as this one has been we'll all be gray-haired by the time we get to Labrador," said Fred.

"I hope we won't have another day like it," assented Tom. "At least, I hope none of us come as near to being killed as Frank was."

"That was terrible."

John at this moment came up from below and reported that Frank was sleeping soundly.

"Do you think we ought to get a doctor for him?" asked Tom.

"We'll see how he is in the morning," replied John. "He may be all right, you know, though of course we don't want to take any chances with him."

"That was a pretty hard blow he got in his chest," remarked Fred.

"It certainly was," said John, "but we'll see how he feels to-morrow."

A few minutes later the skipper came up on deck again. He was in better spirits after a little food and his "grouch" had almost left him.

"That fat friend of yours down there," he said grimly, "snores so loud I couldn't hear myself think."

"Frank certainly does snore," laughed John.

"We're almost at the mouth of the harbor now," continued Bud. "You had better let

me take the wheel. You boys go up for'ard and get the anchor ready. We'll only go about a mile or so up the river."

The stars were now out and the night was clear. The storm had passed on to the north, and, except that the waves were still somewhat high, no one would have suspected what a turmoil had been aroused a short time before.

Soon they changed their course and started to reach up the harbor. It was almost ten o'clock now, and the lights of the hotel on their right and the many cottages along both shores made the scene a very pretty one.

The anchor was heavy, but at last the crew had it ready to slip over the side when the word should be given.

"Take in the jib now!" shouted the skipper.

Soon that sail also was furled, and the *Spray* slid quietly through the still waters of the harbor with only her jigger-sail to propel her.

"All ready, now!" ordered the skipper once more. "Let her go!"

He had brought the bow up into the wind, and, as the anchor chains slid out with a loud

clatter, the *Spray* slowly came to rest about one hundred yards off the shore.

"Now for bed!" cried Fred. "Let's get everything in order as fast as we can and turn in."

The others agreed, and in a brief time all on board the *Spray* were in a sound sleep, well earned after the strenuous day that had just passed.

CHAPTER V

THE WATCH

THE following morning, shortly after the sun had risen, the skipper aroused the members of his crew.

"Wake up, all of you!" he called. "It's time sailor men were up and under way."

"I'm for a swim first," declared Tom.

"And we, too!" joined in the others.

"How do you feel this morning, Frank?" inquired John as his friend appeared in the cabin.

"I'm as good as ever," was the answer. "But, as long as I had a swim last night, I don't think I'll join you this morning."

"All right, then," shouted Tom. "I'll beat you other two fellows in, anyway."

There was a rush for the companionway and, one after another, Tom, Fred, and John dived off the side of the boat.

"There's nothing like cold water to get your eyes open in the morning, Bud!" said Fred as, with his companions, he dragged himself on board the *Spray* once more.

"That's all right, my boy, but I can't swim," replied Bud.

"What! You have lived on a boat most of your life and can't swim? You must be fooling."

"No, I'm not fooling, either," said the skipper tartly. "You see, I've lived on a boat and not in the water, and you don't have to swim to live on a boat. Hurry up now and get that anchor up!" he continued. "Start the kicker, John, and run us out of the harbor. We'll have no breeze till we get outside."

In a few minutes the anchor was hauled in and the *Spray* was chugging toward the open water once more. Outside, as the skipper had predicted, there was a fresh breeze, and the sails were hoisted, the engine stopped, and the *Spray* sped smoothly along, making almost six knots an hour.

Meanwhile, Tom had prepared breakfast, and when they were not on duty on deck the crew

were doing ample justice to the food he had placed on the table in the cabin.

"See this boat coming?" said the skipper that afternoon as they were sailing past Newport. "That's a swordfisher."

"Do you mean they fish for swordfish in that?" asked Fred quickly as he turned his attention to the small steam vessel the skipper had pointed out.

"I mean just that," said Bud. "You see that man in the pulpit on the end of the bowsprit with a harpoon-gun? They cruise up and down along this coast, and when they see a swordfish they shoot a harpoon into him."

"They must be pretty good shots," suggested Frank.

"If your living depended on whether you hit a swordfish or not, you'd be a good shot, too," said Bud soberly.

"You're right, skipper, I guess I would," laughed Fred.

"Are swordfish good to eat?" asked Tom.

"They certainly are," said the skipper.

"How big do they grow?" inquired Frank.

"Oh, from seven to ten or twelve feet long," answered Bud.

"Whew! That's a fair-sized fish, all right," remarked John with a laugh.

"Let's catch a few to use for bait when we get up where the whales are," said Frank, and then he ran for shelter to the cabin, where a volley of cushions was fired upon him.

It was drawing on toward evening now, but the skipper showed no signs of preparing to stop anywhere for the night.

"Are we going to sail all night?" at length asked Fred of their pilot.

"We might as well," Bud replied. "We have a fine breeze which I think will hold out until mornin', anyway. Breezes don't always come when you want them to, you know, so we'd better use this one when we have the chance."

"It suits us, all right," the crew answered in chorus.

"What watches shall we keep?" inquired John.

"I was just thinking of that," said the skipper. "I think Frank and me will be on from eight till twelve to-night; you and Tom from

twelve till four; and then Fred and me from four till eight again."

"That makes two for you, skipper," objected Tom.

"That's all right," said Bud. "Somebody has got to have two, and it better be me."

"Suit yourself," replied Tom. "I'm agreeable if you are."

"You boys better go to bed," said Bud shortly after supper. "Frank and me will take care of the old boat, and when twelve o'clock comes you'll be wishing you'd had some sleep."

"You'll surely call us at twelve, will you?" asked John as with Fred and Tom he started below.

"If the skipper doesn't, I will," responded Frank promptly. "Don't worry about that. I expect to be sleepy by midnight."

Left alone with the skipper, Frank endeavored to induce him to talk about himself and his life.

"I've been near over the world," said Bud in reply to the queries of his young companion. "Ever since I was fourteen I have followed the sea."

"Were you ever seasick?" inquired Frank.

"Seasick? I should say I was! For the first five years I was on a boat I got seasick every rough day."

"But you must have got over it?"

"Yes; now I never get sick," answered Bud. "But I can tell you it was terrible in those days. I would have given up sailoring, but that is the only thing a young fellow like I was could do where I lived."

"You're not married, are you?"

"I am so, and I have two fine youngsters in St. John's."

"You're away from home, then, a good deal, aren't you?" asked Frank.

"Yes; sometimes I don't see my family for eight or ten months at a time."

"Whew!" exclaimed Frank. "Being a sailor isn't all romance, after all, is it?"

"It's a very hard life, being a sailor like me," said Bud simply. "Now, my son," he added, "you'd better go up for'ard and light both the port and the starboard lights. It's getting dark."

"The green is starboard, isn't it?" asked Frank.

"Yes; and the red one is port. You'll find the lanterns below, and the sockets for them are up in the for'ard stays."

"You'd better stay up in the bow when you get those lights up," said Bud as Frank appeared on deck again with a lantern in each hand. "We need a lookout, you know, and if I want you for anything I'll sing out."

The hours passed quickly till midnight, and it was soon time to call Tom and John. Frank went below and was delighted to find his two friends very tired and sleepy when he announced loudly that the time of their watch had arrived.

"Don't you care, boys! It's only for four hours, you know, and if you get discouraged just think how happy I am asleep down here," he said with a laugh.

Frank's teasing did not bother the other two boys, however, and they were soon on deck swathed in sweaters and oilskins, for the night wind was cold.

"John, you take the wheel first and I'll relieve you later," suggested Tom.

"All right," answered John. "What's the course, skipper?"

"Just the way you're going now," replied Bud. "Keep her headed just as she is and you won't have to change the course till I come up at four o'clock."

It was a weird sensation, flying along over inky-black water in the middle of the night. Suppose anything should happen to the boat, thought John. He would be responsible. Every one on board was in his charge, and he decided that he must be very careful that no accident should occur.

He kept a watchful lookout in all directions and also sharp watch that the sails were set as they should be.

It was while he was thinking of all the responsibility resting on him that Tom suddenly called out in alarm from the bow: "Hard aport, John! Turn her quick! We're almost on top of the rocks!"

CHAPTER VI

SKIPPERS' YARNS

INSTANTLY John swung the wheel to port as far as it would go. The *Spray* responded at once and her bow quickly came around in answer to the helm.

The three large sails, however, entirely forgotten by John in his haste to obey Tom's warning, swung heavily and jibed. The boat heeled over dangerously, and as the wind once more filled the sails and the sheet became taut there was a jar and wrench as though the masts were about to be torn from their sockets.

"Great Cæsar, John! Be careful!" exclaimed Tom.

"Where are the rocks? Are we clear of them?" shouted John, ignoring his friend's exclamations.

"Yes, we're all right now," responded Tom. "Get her on the right course again. I hope

that terrible jolt didn't wake anybody down below."

Almost as if in response to the suggestion, the skipper came running out on deck. "What's the matter here? What are you trying to do to this boat?" he shouted angrily at John.

"We were almost on the rocks. I put the wheel hard over and she jibed," said John meekly.

"'Rocks'! What rocks? Don't you know there ain't no rocks within miles of here?" he called to Tom as he ran forward to the place where the young sailor was stationed on the bow. "What's the matter with you?" he demanded. "Are you plumb crazy or were you asleep and dreamt you saw rocks?"

"I was asleep, skipper," replied Tom foolishly, "and I did dream that I saw rocks right under the bow. I don't know how it happened, but I sat down here, and the next thing I knew we were almost ashore. I jumped up and yelled to John as loud as I could. I'm sorry, though that doesn't do any good, I know. Will you believe me if I say it never will happen again?"

"Look here," said Bud, "if you're tired, say so, and go to your bunk. I'll stay on deck. But if you are on the lookout here you are responsible for the boat and for every one on board. We don't want no sleepers for lookouts!" he added sternly.

"It never will occur again," said Tom. "I'm thoroughly ashamed of myself, and I realize what a serious thing it was."

"It better not happen again," the skipper growled as he made his way astern. "You might have pulled the masts right out of her," he said to John as he came once more to the place where the young sailor was standing. "I can't blame you, though; it was the only thing to do."

"Tom won't go to sleep again, I'm sure," said John confidently.

"Well, I hope not. If he does we don't stand much chance of getting to Labrador. Don't forget to call me at four."

The skipper vanished below and all was quiet once more.

"That was a bad break, John," called back Tom from the bow.

"It was, indeed, Tom," came the reply. "We must remember we are responsible for those others down below as well as for ourselves, you know."

"I own up to all you can say, John, though I can't imagine what got into me. I felt like a fool."

Frank and Fred had slept on undisturbed by the commotion. It was decided that they should not be told of what had occurred as long as they had not been awakened.

The skipper readily agreed to this when he and Fred were summoned at four o'clock.

"I guess he's learned his lesson," was the captain's remark when John spoke to him.

The sky was becoming light when Tom and John were relieved. Great, orange-colored bursts of flame shot up in the east. The whole heavens were lighted up and the water reflected the wonderful rays of color.

"Let's wait a moment before we go below," said John, "and look at that sunrise."

"It certainly is the most glorious sight I've ever seen!" assented Tom enthusiastically. "I wonder if it's as beautiful as this every morning?"

"It reminds me of the way Homer described the sunrise," said John after a brief silence. "Do you remember? 'Rosy-fingered Dawn, child of the morning'?"

"Her fingers are certainly rosy this morning," Tom agreed.

The morning found them well across the Nantucket Shoals and rounding Cape Cod. The day was bright and warm, and the crew spent most of their time reading or writing letters to be mailed at their next stopping-place, which was expected to be Marblehead.

"Were you ever shipwrecked, skipper?" inquired Fred that afternoon as they were all seated around the cockpit.

"Three times," said Bud quietly.

"Tell us about it," begged the boys in chorus.

"Well," said Bud, "I was once herring-fishing off the coast of Labrador when a gale struck us. You might think the wind was blowing the other night, but that wasn't even a zephyr to the way she blows down the Labrador."

"'Down' the Labrador? You mean up, don't you?" asked Tom.

"Not at all. I mean down. We always

calls it 'down north' or 'down the Labrador,'" said the skipper with scorn.

"Well, anyway," he continued, "the gale struck us along about six o'clock in the evening. Before the night was over every stitch of canvas we had on our schooner was gone. The mainmast was carried away and two men along with it. We was lashed to the deck and the water was breaking over us at every turn. All we could do was to run before the wind and hope for the best. I tell you, boys, water is the most powerful thing in the world! A wave came over our bow and smashed in the top of the cabin as if it had been an egg-shell. I'd hate to see one of them waves hit this here boat—why, it wouldn't last two seconds.

"We was working the pumps for all we were good for; night and day we kept at them, and it was all we could do to keep even with the water, too, I can tell you! For three days and three nights we run before that gale, and when she stopped blowing we was a thousand miles south of where we started from. A wave hit me and knocked me on to the deck so hard I broke this here left arm."

The skipper bared his arm to the elbow, and a decidedly marked and visible crookedness proved that his arm had, indeed, been broken.

"All I had to eat in all that time," continued Bud, "was one water-soaked sea-biscuit. We couldn't stop to eat. All the men were needed at the pumps, and if we'd ever let up on them we'd have been finished sure. At the end of three days a schooner from Prince Edward Island picked us up. Our boat was almost gone and we couldn't have lasted much longer.

"They took us on board their boat and, after eating enough for five men, I crawled into a bunk and went to sleep. That was Saturday morning, and will you believe me when I say I never woke up till Monday morning?"

"I don't think I will," muttered Frank under his breath; but fortunately no one heard his remark.

"That must have been a terrible experience," said Tom. "I hope we strike nothing like that."

"We're not likely to this time of the year," said Bud. "September is the season for them big blows."

Late that evening they turned into the pretty

little harbor at Marblehead and dropped anchor among scores of other boats, some like their own and others ranging all the way from skiffs to big, ocean-going yachts.

It did not take long to make everything fast for the night, and soon there was no sound to be heard on the *Spray* except the lapping of the waves against her sides.

CHAPTER VII

SOUP

Two days later the *Spray* was off the coast of Maine. The Bay of Fundy now had to be crossed, and the course then lay from Cape Elizabeth, on the Maine coast, to Cape Sable, the nearest extremity of Nova Scotia.

"This here Bay of Fundy," explained Bud to Tom and Fred, "is one of the most dangerous places in the whole world for sailing boats to go."

"Why is that?" asked Tom.

"Because the tides is so big," the skipper continued. "On the other side of the bay, in what they call the Minas Basin, the tide sometimes rises and falls sixty feet. When she comes in she comes in a flying, too, I can tell you!"

"Imagine the tide rising sixty feet!" exclaimed Fred.

"We goes past Cape Sable, and if the weather is bad you can look for some fun there, too," said Bud. "It ain't no joke getting through there on a stormy night."

"How far is it from Cape Elizabeth to Cape Sable?" asked Tom.

"About two hundred miles."

"That should take us about a night and a day, shouldn't it?"

"Yes," said Bud, "if we get good weather. I don't like to cross this bay in a forty-foot boat, though. We are out of sight of land about all the time, you know, and if there comes up a storm I'd just as soon be on shore."

"Are many boats wrecked off the coast of Nova Scotia?" inquired Fred.

"On Sable Island, which is about one hundred and fifty miles east of Halifax, the coast is covered with the wrecks of ships," replied the skipper.

"You see," he continued, "the fogs is very t'ick off the banks, and there being so many fishing-boats in that region there is bound to be trouble. The storms get very bad there, too, but of late they have put more lighthouses on

the island, along with some life-savers, so it ain't so bad as it was formerly."

"Look!" exclaimed Tom abruptly. "Land is almost out of sight! It's four P. M. now, and by this time to-morrow we ought to be off Nova Scotia."

"We ought to be," said Bud, "and I hope we shall be. If this breeze keeps up we'll be there before that time."

"See the whales!" called John suddenly from the bow.

All eyes were turned in the direction in which John directed. Sure enough, a school of whales could readily be seen about a half mile distant.

"Watch them spout," said Bud.

As he spoke, what looked like a thin stream of water was seen shooting up into the air from the places where the great animals were plainly visible. They were swimming close to the top. Every few minutes one of them would dive down, and the great tail would be seen far out of the water as the huge bulk disappeared below.

"They are following a school of fish, most

likely," explained the skipper. "Anyway, the Bay of Fundy is a great place for whales."

"That's the first time I ever saw a whale," said Frank. "Do you think we'll see them very often on our way up?"

"You're apt to," answered Bud. "There are lots of whales in the north, you know, and maybe you'll have a chance to stop at a whale factory. That's where they cut 'em up and get the oil and all that kind of thing."

"I'd certainly like to see one," exclaimed Frank. "It must be very interesting."

"The smell is interesting, all right. You may not want to see one so much after you smell one."

The wind still favored them all that night, and late the following afternoon the *Spray* passed safely by Cape Sable and through the straits into the waters of Nova Scotia.

"Look at all the sea-gulls!" abruptly exclaimed John as great flocks of the sea-birds circled around the boat.

"Those is sea-pigeons," corrected Bud. "Get your guns and see if you can hit a few of them."

No second invitation was required, and

quickly all four boys were on deck with their guns in hand. The birds flew near them, and when nearly fifty shots had been fired there were five of the sea-pigeons bagged.

"You people aren't very good shots," said Bud somewhat scornfully, "but I guess you got enough to make some soup for dinner."

The *Spray* now was brought about, and in a brief time the dead birds had been picked out of the water and the boys set to work cleaning their catch.

"Make soup of them, Tom," directed the skipper. "Put in vegetables and all sorts of things that will go into it."

"All right, skipper," replied the cook.

Tom went below to prepare dinner, and all anxiously awaited the time for the meal to arrive.

"Here you are, John! You try it first," said Tom that evening as he poured out a bowlful of "sea-pigeon soup" into John's dish.

All eyes were on John as he lifted a spoonful of the smoking liquid to his lips. Waiting a moment for the soup to cool, he then swallowed the contents of his spoon. Instantly a strange

expression came over his face and he shuddered as though he had tasted something very disagreeable to him.

"What's the matter, John? Isn't it good?" inquired Tom.

"Whew! It tastes like bad salt fish!" was the response, and again John shuddered at his recollection.

"How can it taste like fish? There's no fish in it," said Tom.

"It does just the same! That's awful stuff!"

"Say, skipper, John says your soup is bad and tastes like fish," Fred called up to Bud, who was on deck in charge of the wheel.

"Of course it tastes like fish. All those birds eat is fish. But it isn't bad."

Meanwhile, the other boys had tasted of the concoction and, like John, all had decided it was not fit to eat.

"Save me some of that!" called Bud. "I like it, and you don't know what's good."

True to his word, the skipper ate a huge bowl of the soup and really seemed to enjoy it.

"You see, I've lived on fish all my life," he explained, "and I like it in any form."

"You're certainly welcome to all the soup," said the crew in chorus.

The wind died down toward evening and John started the engine, as it was the intention of the skipper not to stop until they reached Halifax. Consequently, they chugged along all that night, and it was not until after sunrise that the wind freshened sufficiently to permit of their stopping the engine.

About four o'clock that afternoon they rounded Sambro Point and then turned into Halifax harbor.

"We're getting in here none too soon," remarked Bud. "Look at that fog-bank coming up," he explained, as he pointed toward the sea in the distance.

"I should say so!" exclaimed Tom. "Why, it looks as though it were coming right up out of the water, doesn't it?"

"Yes, and in an hour you won't be able to see a hundred feet out here."

The engine was started once more, the sails were furled, and the *Spray* proceeded on her way up the harbor toward the city of Halifax. Soon the city appeared to view, the docks and

wharfs in the foreground and, on the hills above, the fort and the barracks. St. George's Island in the harbor presented a grim spectacle, and according to the skipper was "chock-full of powder and explosives," so that it could be blown up at the first approach of an enemy.

In a short time the *Spray* was made fast alongside one of the public docks and the crew were making ready to go ashore.

"Tom's cooking is all right," said Frank, "but to-night I'm going to the hotel here, and, after crossing out the date on the bill of fare, I'm going to order everything else on it."

The others seemed to have the same desire, and before long as determined a crowd of men as ever stormed a fort or looted a merchantship set out for the Halifax Hotel.

Luckily for the hotel their mission was peaceful.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ROBBER

"THAT was the best meal I ever ate," sighed Frank when the young sailors returned to the *Spray* late in the evening.

"It certainly was," agreed John. "By the way, where did the skipper go?"

"He said he was going to see a friend of his and would be back in a little while," replied Tom.

"Well, I'm not going to sit up for him, I know that!"

"Nor I!" joined in Frank. "All that dinner made me sleepy, and, as there are no watches to-night, I expect to sleep a hole through my bunk."

"Let's all turn in!" exclaimed John. "This is the first chance we've had to sleep all night for a long time. Do you know, this looks like a

pretty tough part of the city!" he continued as they were making ready for the night.

"It certainly does," agreed Fred. "There were some awfully hard-looking characters hanging around the boat all day. I'd hate to be robbed."

"Oh, there's no chance of that, I guess," yawned Tom. "Anyway, it's not going to keep me awake."

"Just the same, I wouldn't trust any of them very far," Fred protested.

However, it was not long before all four boys were in the land of dreams, and if any of them had been worried about robbers he did not show it now. Frank and Tom slept in the cabin bunks, Fred had a soft mattress on the floor, while John occupied the stateroom just forward of the cabin. There was no settled arrangement as to where any one should sleep, and they took turns occupying the more comfortable beds.

The docks were now deserted and, save for an occasional lantern strung to some masthead, all was in darkness. The sky was overcast and the water looked inky-black and forbidding.

An hour or more had elapsed when there appeared on the wharf, to which the *Spray* was moored, the stealthy figure of a man. He moved swiftly and silently, and, crouching low, he acted as though he was fearful of detection.

If there had been sufficient light and if there had been any one near to see, it would have been noticed that he was masked. A black felt hat further helped to hide his features, while a great, scraggly beard covered all the lower part of his face. In his left hand he carried an electric flash-light and in his right an enormous pistol the barrel of which was at least six inches long.

Advancing cautiously to the dock where the *Spray* was lying, he stopped and quickly removed his shoes. Next he placed them on the wharf and at once dropped lightly to the deck. He looked sharply about him in all directions, and then made his way at once to the top of the companionway.

He listened intently for any sign of any one stirring below, but evidently heard nothing to alarm him. One step at a time he descended the companionway until he came to the cabin

There appeared on the wharf the stealthy figure of a man

floor. There he stopped once more and quickly flashed his light all about him.

The light fell on Tom and Frank in their bunks and at length disclosed Fred lying on his mattress on the floor. The robber nimbly stepped over him and, going to the shelf, took the chimney from the lamp preparatory to lighting it. As he took the box of safety matches and struck one, Tom stirred in his sleep. The robber wheeled like a flash and covered him with his gun, but in a few seconds the lad was breathing as quietly as ever.

The man evidently understood his business and was trusting to the deep sleep of the boys to aid him. The lamp having been lighted, he turned and, once again stepping over Fred, took his stand at the foot of the companionway.

Then, leaning forward, he struck Fred sharply across the shins with the butt of his gun. Fred groaned in his sleep and opened his eyes.

"Get up, you!" ordered the stranger.

"What's the matter? What do you want?" said Fred sleepily.

"I'll show you what I want! Get up! And you, too! And you!" he growled, turning to

Tom and Fred, who also had been awakened by the tones of the robber's voice.

By this time Fred was wide awake, and, seeing the glint of the pistol barrel in the intruder's hand, he lost no time in getting up.

"Now, all three of you line up along that shelf!" came the gruff command. "And if any one of you tries to get funny I'll fill him so full of lead he'll weigh a ton. Where's the other one?" he added with an oath.

"There isn't any other," said Tom.

"Don't lie to me! There's another, and you get him out of that room quick, do you hear!"

"No; don't go in there!" the robber said warningly as Tom started toward the door. "Just call to him to come out."

"John! John!" called Tom promptly.

Almost immediately John appeared at the door, and when he saw the masked robber and the huge revolver, scarcely aware of what he was doing, he lifted his hands above his head.

"Now, I want every cent you've got and, if you have any desire to see to-morrow, bring out what you have quick and don't start any funny business!"

Every remark was punctuated by a flourish of the gun, and the boys needed no second warning to realize that the intruder was deadly in earnest.

"One at a time," the robber ordered. "You first," he said, pointing to Fred. "Get your valuables and put them right on the floor in the middle of this here cabin!"

Fred hastened to obey, and one after another the other boys brought their watches and money and deposited them in a heap on the floor.

"Now," said the robber when the last one had brought his contribution, "I'm going to take this stuff and get out without hurting anybody. But if any one tries to follow me I'll show daylight through him! There ain't no use in your hollering because there ain't no one around here this time of night."

"I wish the skipper would come," whispered John to Fred, who was nearest to him.

"Keep quiet there, you!" and a flourish of the gun made John obey at once.

With more oaths and threatenings the robber began to gather up his loot. He was seizing

the money and the watches as fast as he was able and stuffing all alike into his pockets.

Suddenly and without the least warning Tom leaped upon the thief as he was bending over his task, and both of them rolled over on the floor in a desperate grapple.

CHAPTER IX

WHO THE ROBBER WAS

Over and over the man and the boy rolled upon the cabin floor. Fortunately, at the first impact, the robber's gun had been knocked from his hand. Fred at once pounced upon it and tossed it into one of the bunks where it could do no harm.

Meanwhile, a strange thing happened.

Frank and Fred at once started to Tom's assistance, but John interfered.

"Let them alone!" he shouted. "Let him up, Tom!" he cried.

Strange, gurgling sounds came from the robber, who was completely overpowered and whose throat Tom was holding in a vice-like grip. The man still struggled and choked and evidently was trying to speak.

His mask had been torn away in the struggle

and his great, rough beard was twisted about until now it was hanging from his neck.

"Let him up, Tom! Let him up!" shouted John once more. "Don't you see it's the skipper you're choking?"

"What's that?" gasped Tom, not fully comprehending what John was saying.

"It's all a joke and you're nearly killing the skipper. Let go of him and I'll explain."

Reluctantly, Tom released his hold of his victim and arose to his feet. The skipper, for it, indeed, was he, slowly followed him. His breath was almost gone and he was rubbing his neck ruefully.

"You see," explained John, "the skipper and I planned a fake robbery. We thought it would be a good joke on you all, but we never imagined you were going to get so rough about it."

"It was a fine joke," the skipper growled. "He nearly broke me neck."

"I'm sorry, skipper," laughed John, "but I never imagined any one of these boys would dare tackle you when you had that gun in your hand."

The three "victims" were beginning to un-

derstand what was happening, and all commenced to talk at once.

"You scared me nearly to death, anyway," said Frank.

"I thought it was the real thing, all right," agreed Fred.

"I'm sorry I hurt you, Bud," Tom apologized, "but I hated to see everything I own going off without a struggle."

"Well," said John, "if it had worked the way we had planned it, it would have made a fine story to tell on you three all next winter."

"Personally, I'm just as glad it all turned out this way," said Fred. "That was my grandfather's watch and I should have hated to think I'd lost it."

"Oh, we would have told you about it in the morning, so you wouldn't have worried long."

"Here's your watches and money and no more of your jokes for me! They be too rough," grumbled the skipper as he made ready to go to bed.

"Don't you care, skip! You make a fine-looking robber," said Frank with a laugh.

The cabin was soon restored to order and

presently all on board had resumed their interrupted slumbers.

"Good morning, robber," said Frank the following morning as he discovered the skipper applying ointment to his neck. "How do you feel?"

"My neck is awful sore," replied Bud. "Say, that young feller certainly has got a grip!"

All through the breakfast hour the "hold-up" was once more thoroughly discussed, and all now agreed that it was a good joke; that is, all except the skipper, who was not yet quite sure that he could see the funny side of being choked.

During the morning a supply of fresh water was put on board the *Spray* by the busy crew and the gasolene also was replenished. Toward noon the moorings were cast off and once more the *Spray* was headed for the open water.

"I'm afraid it will be very t'ick outside," said the skipper, as they drew away from the dock. "It was coming in yesterday, you remember, and the wind now is in the right direction for fog."

"I hear a fog-horn now," said Fred abruptly. "Where is that?"

"On the lighthouse at the entrance to the harbor," explained Bud.

"We won't go out if it's very bad, will we?" asked John.

"No; but we'll run down and take a look."

It quickly became evident when they reached the mouth of the harbor that departure, for the present, was out of the question. The fog was all about them and seemed to be increasing in density every moment. It was bright and clear back near the city, but here where the yawl now was the mist was over everything. A fog-whistle, from an invisible lighthouse close by, constantly sounded.

"We'll run in behind one of them islands here for a while and see if the fog lifts any," said Bud at last.

Accordingly, the *Spray* was piloted in the direction the skipper indicated, and the anchor was dropped behind a narrow strip of land that separated the sea from the bay.

"How would you like some steamed clams for supper?" asked Bud.

"Fine!" came the chorus in reply.

"Well, just get that dinky little life-boat

overboard and a couple of you row over to that beach and dig a basketful." The skipper, as he spoke, pointed to a sandy beach about a quarter of a mile distant.

"There's any quantity of them there," he added.

"Come on, John! You and I'll go," suggested Fred.

"All right," John agreed, and not many minutes had elapsed before the two boys were seated in the small boat pulling swiftly for the beach.

It was damp and disagreeable on the *Spray* and the fog poured in almost like rain. A dismal day it was, and those who had been left on board spent their time in reading and sleeping.

The fog soon became thicker and thicker until it was impossible to see any shore, and the bow of the *Spray* was hardly discernible from the stern.

"Nova Scotia is the place for fogs, all right," said Bud. "They gets them here worse than any place in the world, I do believe."

"Sailors don't like fogs, do they?" inquired Tom.

"I should say not! Fog is almost worse than storms. In a storm you can at least see where you are going."

The afternoon dragged on and at last the time came when supper must be prepared, but the two boys had not yet returned. The skipper plainly was becoming anxious and kept peering out into the mist in a vain endeavor to discover any signs of the missing lads.

"Them boys ought to be back by now," he said after an unusually prolonged inspection.

An hour, however, passed and still there was no sign of the missing members of the crew.

"Get that horn out of the locker below and blow it," the skipper finally said to Tom.

Another hour passed. Tom and Frank took turns at blowing the horn and loudly calling the names of their companions.

No answer came, however, and night drew on, but still Fred and John had not come back to the boat nor was there any sign of them to be seen.

CHAPTER X

THE SEARCH IN THE FOG

WHEN John and Fred left the *Spray* they rowed at once to the beach indicated by the skipper. Pulling their boat far up on the sandy shore, they made it fast and then quickly began their search for clams.

This was an easy task, as there was an abundance of the bivalves in the sand along the shore. Soon their pail was filled to overflowing, and as it was yet early, they decided to make a tour of exploration before they returned to the yawl.

"This is a deserted place, isn't it?" said Fred as they walked along the barren, lonely shore.

"It certainly is," John replied. "We're only about three or four miles from Halifax, too."

A narrow strip of land separated the rocky stretch from the ocean, and soon the boys were walking along the shore of the sea.

"Look at the breakers off there!" said John, pointing to the curving line in the distance as he spoke.

"I don't think those are breakers," replied Fred. "It looks more like rapids or a whirlpool to me."

"Let's go see what it is."

They quickly arrived at the place, for it was close by, and, standing on the nearest point of land, they looked out upon what had seemed to them to be breakers.

"I know what that is," said John. "That's where the ocean meets the water coming out of that inlet in the bay. The tide is beginning to run out, and when it meets the ocean waves coming in it causes that sort of whirlpool."

"I guess you're right," agreed Fred. "That is what is called a 'tide-rip,' isn't it?"

"I think so."

"It looks bad, anyway, and I should hate to get caught in one of those rips in a rowboat."

"There certainly is a fog to-day," said John. "Look at it all around us here! I think it's getting worse, too."

"Yes, it is, and I'm glad we're safe in the

harbor instead of being out there on the ocean somewhere."

"There's one thing about it, though, Fred," said his companion, "there's not likely to be much wind when there's a fog."

"Of course not. If there was a wind it would blow the fog away."

The two boys still were walking along the rocky shore, scrambling over huge boulders and across the pebbly stretches of the beach.

Behind them was a line of fir-trees and a scrubby growth of small bushes. The fog drove in from the sea like a fine rain. The day was chilly and the cold mist soon drenched the boys to the skin. Their faces and clothes were wet and great drops of moisture hung on every near-by bush and tree.

"Imagine this coast in a winter storm!" suggested John.

"If I was safe on shore I'd love to see it," answered Fred. "It must be a wonderful sight."

The boys by this time had begun to retrace their steps, and, passing once more through the strip of woods, they soon came to the shore

where their boat had been beached. After a walk of a half mile or more they came to the boat. The tide had begun to ebb and the skiff now was completely out of water.

"This is the thickest fog I've ever seen!" exclaimed John. "Why, I don't believe you can see over fifty feet away!"

"It's a good thing the *Spray* isn't very far off," Fred replied. "If it was any distance we might have trouble in finding her."

"We would, indeed," agreed John thoughtfully. "Shall I row?"

"All right. Keep her pointed straight out."

They at once struck out from the shore, John with the oars in his hands and Fred seated in the stern holding their pail of clams.

"I'm having a great old time on this trip, John," said Fred after a brief silence.

"So am I. It is fun, isn't it? And how much better this is, too, than sitting around some hotel piazza all summer!"

"You're right! You know, all my family were worried for fear that something would happen to us. They don't seem to think we can take care of ourselves. I told them that

was silly, and I think we have proved it so far."

"The only bad thing that has happened was Frank's getting knocked overboard, and no one could help that sort of an accident," said John lightly.

"It seems to me we ought to be nearly back to the boat by this time," broke in Fred. "We've been rowing about twenty minutes. I can't see a thing in this mist."

"I was thinking that very same thing," said John. "Are you sure we started in the right direction?"

"Oh, yes. Row back now a little over to our left."

The boat was turned around and started back on its course. After rowing about ten minutes more John rested on his oars and looked anxiously about him.

"We certainly should have found the *Spray* by this time," he said anxiously. "We've gotten a bit off our course, that's all."

"We can't be very far off, for we started right, and as far as I can see we have kept going in the same direction."

"I know," said John, "but in a fog like this it is almost impossible to keep on the same course. The trouble is we can't see any land or anything else to guide ourselves by."

"Let's give them a shout," Fred suggested. He accordingly stood up in the stern, and forming a trumpet of his hands he called at the top of his voice: "Halloo, Tom! Halloo, Frank! Halloo, the *Spray!*"

All was silent while John and Fred strained their ears for an answering shout, but none came.

"Say, John," exclaimed Fred, "I don't think that lighthouse whistle sounds as loud as it did; we must have been getting farther and farther away from it all the time."

"That's true; it doesn't," John agreed thoughtfully after listening a moment. "That is no joke; but I don't think we need worry just yet."

"What time is it?"

"Half past six," replied John, consulting his watch.

"They'll be getting worried about us on board the *Spray*, I'm afraid," said Fred. "That's the

only thing that bothers me. Let me take the oars now," he continued, "and we'll row toward that lighthouse whistle. Our boat is nearer that than we are, that's certain."

The anxious boys carefully exchanged positions in the boat, and Fred began rowing in the direction indicated by the deep moan of the foghorn. Darkness was coming on which made it still more difficult to see before them, while the fog was becoming thicker than before, if such a thing were possible.

Minute after minute Fred toiled at the oars while John sat grimly silent in the stern. Both boys were deeply anxious now, though neither would have admitted such a thing. Neither spoke, but each kept a sharp lookout on both sides in a vain endeavor to make out some definite object to help guide them.

Nearer and nearer sounded the whistle, but still no land appeared nor was there any sign of the *Spray*.

Again and again either Fred or John stood up and called and called again, but no answering voice was heard.

"Say, Fred," exclaimed John at length, "the

water is getting rougher here. I believe we're drifting out toward the open sea. We'd better turn back. The lighthouse must be right over there," he went on, indicating the direction of the whistle. "Let's go over that way."

The boat accordingly was headed in the opposite direction. Fred pulled at the oars with all his strength. The incoming tide was behind them and the little craft almost raced through the water. Pitchy blackness was all around them.

Not a word was spoken now and each boy's face was white and set. They had no desire to spend the night on the open sea, and the suggestion that their comrades on the *Spray* would be much alarmed also furnished them with further disquieting thoughts.

Suddenly there was a terrible jar. The skiff crashed headlong into a black shape directly ahead of them, a light or two dimly appeared, and a moment later their boat was upset and Fred and John were struggling in the water.

CHAPTER XI

COD

THE two boys came to the surface in a moment and were soon clinging to their overturned boat.

"Halloo, there! Who's that?" called a startled voice out of the darkness.

"Tom!" shouted Fred, "is that you?"

"Yes. Is that you, Fred?"

"We're both here," answered John.

Frank and the skipper were now on the deck of the *Spray*, for it was their own boat which they had struck. In very short order the two boys were hauled out of the water and climbed, dripping, upon the deck.

"Where have you two been?" exclaimed the skipper. "You almost scared the life out of us."

"We got lost in the fog and have been hunt-

ing for the *Spray* for hours. We had almost given up hope, too," gasped John.

"Why didn't you call or blow the horn for us?" said Fred.

"'Blow the horn'! Why, we did blow it and have been shouting out into the fog for hours. We'd almost given up hope, and had decided you were somewhere on shore and wouldn't try to get back to-night."

"Well, we tried, all right," said John, "but we never expected to find you just the way we did."

"I've got your skiff," said the skipper, coming up from the stern. "A couple of you help me get her aboard."

"I'm going to get these clothes off and get into bed," declared John. "Come on, Fred."

"The clams are gone, I guess, John," said Fred dejectedly.

"Let them go! I'm glad enough to get here; and I've lost my appetite for clams, anyway."

The overturned boat was soon hauled on board the *Spray*, and after the water had been emptied out of it the little skiff was put back in place. Fred and John lost no time in getting

rid of their wet clothes, and after robbing the larder of an enormous quantity of food they crawled into their bunks and instantly fell fast asleep.

"If you boys ain't more careful we'll never get to Labrador," said the skipper to Tom and Frank as the three gathered in the cabin once more. "Why, them two boys might have drifted out to sea in this fog, or anything might have happened to them! It was just fool luck that they happened to run into us the way they did."

"It certainly was luck, wasn't it?" exclaimed Tom.

"I hope our luck keeps up," said Frank. "It begins to look as though we should need it."

When morning came and the crew of the *Spray* came on deck again, the fog had disappeared and the sun was shining.

"We're off!" announced Bud sharply.

The sails were hoisted, the anchor was raised, and the *Spray* started proudly out of the harbor. The change in the weather had raised the spirits, too, of every one on board. The damp, foggy air of the preceding day had served to

depress all the crew, but now life once more seemed to be worth living and enthusiasm reigned again.

"What's the next stop, skipper?" asked Frank.

"I want to make the Bras d'Or Lakes if I can."

"Do we sail through them?"

"We do; and a prettier place you've never seen. They go right through the centre of Cape Breton Island, you know. We can go outside, though, if you'd rather."

"Personally, I'd rather go inside," said Tom. "We've seen a lot of the ocean and we'll see a lot more, so the sight of some lakes will be a welcome change."

"I agree with you, Tom," exclaimed John. As all the others were of the same mind, it was decided that their course should lie through the lakes.

Directly after luncheon they drew near to a fishing fleet. There was a schooner anchored or drifting not far away and all about it were little boats containing the fishermen.

"That's the way they do it," explained the

skipper in reply to the questions of one of the boys. "You see, they scatter the dories all over the fishing grounds, and then at the end of the day they all bring what they've caught back to the schooner."

"Can we get a fish from them?" asked John.

"I guess so. We'll sail close up to one of the boats and see, anyway."

John stationed himself on the bow all ready to call out. Each dory contained two men and each man took care of three fish-lines. The lines were tied to one of the seats in the boats and no poles were used.

The fisherman, every few seconds, would grasp one of the lines in his hand and lift it to see if there was a fish on the hook.

They were fishing for cod, and if a fish was hooked it was quickly hauled in hand over hand. The men seemed to take slight interest in their occupation, and as soon as a fish was caught it was removed from the hook, fresh bait put on, and almost indifferently the line was thrown overboard once more.

"Look at that man!" exclaimed Frank, point-

ing as he spoke to the occupant of the boat toward which they were heading. "He just caught a cod that must weigh fifteen or twenty pounds, and he seems about as excited over it as a stone post."

"He was watching us all the time," said Tom, "and I don't believe he even saw the fish."

"Well, if you had spent all your life in one of those boats catching codfish, you wouldn't be very much excited about it either!" tartly interposed the skipper.

"Will you sell us a fish?" shouted John from the bow as they came within hailing distance of the nearest dory.

The skipper had brought the *Spray* up into the wind, and now she had practically no motion at all.

"Certainly," answered the fisherman. "How big a one do you want?"

"That last one you caught will be just right, I think."

The man held the cod up to view. It was a beautiful fish, and there was no doubt about its having been freshly caught.

"How much?"

"Oh, ten cents, I guess," was the cautious reply.

The money was handed over to the man, who meanwhile had brought his boat alongside the *Spray*, and the codfish was received in return.

"Fine boat you have there," said the fisherman. "Where you bound?"

"Labrador," replied John.

"That so? She's pretty small, but she looks strong. I guess you can make it, all right."

"We hope so," said John. "How's the fishing this season?"

"Pretty poor."

"That's too bad. I hope your luck gets better."

"Thank you. I wish you all good luck, too. Good-by!" the fisherman called as the *Spray* started to bear away from him.

"Good-by! Good luck!" called all on board the *Spray*, and in a short time the fisherman and his tiny boat were merely a dot in the distance.

"Ten cents for a twenty-pound codfish!" laughingly exclaimed John coming back from

The man held the cod up to view

the bow. "Here is the place to solve the high-cost-of-living problem."

"That's all codfish is worth, I think," said Fred. "I'd just as soon eat putty."

"The finest fish in the world!" spoke up the skipper indignantly.

"Do you really think so?" inquired Fred quizzically.

"I do, except Labrador herring. Them is the finest fish in the world. Labrador herring fetches more than any other fish in the market, and it certainly is worth it. We was after herring when that gale struck us down the Labrador. You remember my telling you about that?"

"Oh, yes; indeed we do," came a chorus of replies.

"But codfish is fine, too," insisted Bud, bestowing a pitying glance upon Fred as he spoke.

"Maybe it is; and I suppose it's just as well we all don't like the same things," said Fred good-naturedly.

The *Spray* passed numerous other fishing schooners in the course of that day, and every

one they passed evinced the greatest interest in the graceful, white-sailed yawl.

Oftentimes the boys passed close enough to the fishing vessels to exchange a few words with the crews, and all the sailors wished them the best of luck and a pleasant voyage.

CHAPTER XII

AMONG STRANGERS

THE following afternoon the *Spray* arrived at the locks at the entrance to the Bras d'Or Lakes. The sails had all been furled, for the engine was to be used in passing through the beautiful waters.

It was discovered when they arrived at the locks, however, that they would be unable to pass through until the following morning. Accordingly, the boys made the *Spray* fast for the night and started out upon a little tour of inspection.

Other vessels and crews also were waiting as they were. Schooners were there from all parts of the world. Some were loaded with lumber, some were going to get lumber, and one had a cargo of salt.

"Where are you bound, captain?" asked John of the master of the last-mentioned boat.

"Battle Harbor."

"Is that so? So are we."

"Yes?" continued the captain, who evidently was Scotch. "I got a load of salt from Cadiz and am going to take back a load of codfish."

"Back to Cadiz?"

"No. Back to Scotland. The east coast. That's where we come from."

"You've got quite a long trip ahead of you, I should say," said Tom.

"Yes, quite a long trip," returned the captain unemotionally. "In this business you get used to long trips. Is that your yawl?" he asked, indicating the *Spray*.

"Yes. Wouldn't you like to come aboard and take a look at her?" asked John.

"I would like to see her."

The party all walked back along the edge of the canal to the place where the *Spray* was lying. A curious crowd, meanwhile, had collected and the crews of almost all the near-by vessels also were standing along the shore inspecting the boat.

Inquiring glances were cast at the boys when

they arrived, as if all were curious to see what the appearance of the people who owned such a boat would be like. Very few had ever before seen a boat like the *Spray*, and her white paint and clean, hardwood decks and glistening sails presented a sharp contrast to some of the near-by schooners.

Practically all the sailing vessels of every description needed paint. The sails were gray and the decks were covered with an accumulation to which apparently every cargo that had ever been carried on board had contributed something.

When the boys arrived the crowd on the bank parted to permit them to pass, and every one spoke a word of greeting to them. This was returned by the boys, who quickly made their way into the cabin.

There they found the skipper seated, entertaining still more people from the other boats. No names were known or required, and the visitors were all seated informally in different parts of the little room.

The skipper was very proud of the *Spray* and was taking full advantage of this oppor-

tunity to "show off" before the other sailors. They were a quiet body of men who spoke but little, and when they did it was in a low tone of voice. Bud did most of the talking, and the boys frequently would nudge one another as he made some particularly boastful statement.

"Yes, sir, she's all finished in mahogany, and every stick of wood in her is selected," Bud was saying. "Two staterooms, you see," he continued. "A galley on that side and way up under the bow is another bunk. It ain't like these here, of course, and you have to crawl on your hands and knees to get into it. This kicker here is just to help out when there is no wind, but she's a big help, all right, in a place like this."

The skipper rambled on, while his audience listened quietly and said little. They were silent and serious men. Many long years at sea had made them so, and no matter what happened to them they took it all in the same quiet manner.

"They were an interesting lot of men," said Frank after their guests had departed. "I'd like to hear them tell some of their experiences."

"So should I," exclaimed Tom. "Those men have been about all over the world, and some of the things that have happened to them would be well worth hearing."

"It's hard to get those fellows to talk much about themselves," said Bud. "They do have a lot of exciting times, but to them it's not exactly what you call romance. It's only hard, unpleasant work and they like to forget about it just as soon as they are able."

"I suppose that's so," said Tom.

"You see," chimed in Fred, "we are out for a good time and to have experiences and, as it is all new to us, we enjoy every bit. To them I suppose it is an old story and they say no man enjoys what he *has* to do."

The following morning at daybreak the boats began to pass through the locks. The *Spray*, in her turn, was raised up and sent on through, the boys themselves helping to open and shut the gates of the canal.

It was slow work, but at last they were through the lock and passed the narrow passageway on into the lakes. On the other side of the lock they met their friend of the evening before, who had recently arrived from Cadiz.

Naturally, he had no engine in his schooner, and, as the channel was very narrow for two or three miles, he gladly accepted their offer of a tow.

The *Spray* chugged up alongside its large companion, and a line from the schooner's bow was made fast to the stern of the yawl. This made quite a heavy burden for the engine, but when the two boats were once started they sped along at a good rate of speed.

In the course of a half-hour they had passed through the narrows and come out into the broader waters of the lake. The line from the schooner then was cast off and after good-bys were shouted back and forth she was left behind.

"We saved that man two hours by giving him a lift," said Bud. "That channel is awful narrow and with this head wind it would take him 'most forever to beat through there."

"I'm glad we did," said John. "He is a fine man and I hope we may see him again when we get to Labrador."

"I guess he'll be there long ahead of us," replied the skipper. "You see, he probably

isn't going to stop and go fishing up all the rivers the way you are."

"I like to sail through here," spoke up Frank. "I was beginning to get tired of fog and water and nothing else. Here you have beautiful trees on all sides of you, and it looks as if a man could swim ashore if he fell overboard."

"*You* could get ashore from the middle of the ocean, if you didn't starve to death," said John laughing. "You're getting so fat you couldn't sink, I believe."

"Is that so?" retorted Frank. "Perhaps I am getting a little bit stout, but I can just put you on your back any time you say."

"You hear that, John?" said Tom. "I wouldn't let a man say that about me unless he could back up what he says."

"Go on, Frank! Put him down!" said Fred. "I believe you can do it!"

"I bet you a sailor cracker against a ginger-snap he can't," said Tom.

"You are on!"

The bout was speedily arranged, and the cock-pit was cleared for action. Cushions and mattresses were placed all about the sides to pre-

vent any injury, and the wrestlers went below to prepare for the contest.

Soon they reappeared, stripped to their waists and without shoes or stockings.

Tom was chosen referee, and at his command the match started.

Frank made a lunge at John and gripped him about the waist. Back and forth the two boys strained and tugged until at last they fell to the deck together. Frank was puffing hard, but showed an agility which surprised all his friends.

He was on top of John, who was lying face down on the mat. In vain Frank tugged at his arms and then at his shoulders and legs in an endeavor to turn him over upon his back. John lay as if he was glued to the mat and Frank's efforts were of no avail.

"He's letting Frank tire himself out, I think," suggested Fred in a low tone to the skipper.

"He's almost out of wind now," responded Bud, who was an interested spectator.

The boys were a constant source of amusement to him, and he never tired listening to their bantering words or watching their antics.

Suddenly John lifted himself from the floor

with a great effort. Frank was taken completely by surprise by the unexpected action, and as John arose to his hands and knees he was thrown sprawling on the mat. Like a flash John sprang at him, grasping him by his bare shoulders.

His hands, however, slid right off, and, try as he might, he could not secure any grip on Frank.

"Foul!" he shouted abruptly, springing to his feet. "I claim foul! Frank has got oil smeared all over himself and my hands slip right off."

"What's that?" exclaimed Tom.

Frank was now on his feet and was grinning delightedly at John.

"Certainly, I've got oil on myself," he said. "That is a very old and a very clever trick."

"How about that, Mr. Referee?" sharply demanded John. "I claim a foul and I should win by default."

"After deep consideration, I award the bout to John," said Tom. "Oil is not allowed in wrestling bouts on the good ship *Spray*."

There were loud protestations from Frank and Fred, but they were without avail. Tom's

decision was not to be changed, and John was declared the victor.

"All right," cried Frank. "Next time I won't use oil and I'll throw him just the same."

"And now, Fred," said Tom, "don't forget that you owe me a gingersnap."

CHAPTER XIII

TO THE TOP OF THE TOWER

"Now, Fred," said Tom, "if you will pay the bet you lost I will go down and cook that codfish."

"In one moment," replied Fred dryly. Going below, he secured a gingersnap from the storeroom and presented it to Tom on the largest plate he could find.

"The way to win in a wrestling bout is to referee it yourself and then disqualify the man you bet against," said Tom soberly. "Say, Fred, this tastes fine."

The wrestlers were still recovering from their recent efforts, and each was still protesting that he was the better man.

"You wait!" warned John. "The next time you get smart and put oil on yourself I'll fix you."

"What will you do?" inquired Frank, who was still breathing hard.

"I'm going to get some sand and rub it all over my hands. Then if I ever grab you I won't slip, and you'll lose half the skin on your back."

"Oh, you two stop talking about what fine wrestlers you are!" broke in Fred. "You haven't got much on except the oil, and it seems to me you'd better go down and finish the dressing."

Immediately both John and Frank appeared to be violently ill, and holding on to their heads they rocked back and forth as if in great agony.

"That was easily the worst joke I've ever heard!" groaned Frank.

"Yes," said John, "and if he tries any more like that, I say we put him overboard. By the way, that gives me an idea."

"Hang on to it; you may never get another!" said Fred.

Ignoring his friend's remark, John disappeared into the cabin and soon returned with a stout rope. Going to the stern of the boat, he made one end fast to the jigger-mast.

Quickly he divested himself of the few clothes he still had on, and then, grasping the other end of the rope firmly in both hands, he leaped into the water.

He soon came to the surface again, and, clinging to the rope, was towed rapidly through the water. He beamed upon his interested spectators on board the *Spray* and then rolled over upon his back. His arms were stretched out over his head and he was almost obscured from sight as his head raised a wave all about him not unlike the one ploughed up by the bow of a ship.

"His idea is a good one, after all, isn't it?" exclaimed Frank. "I'm next on that rope."

In the course of a few minutes John pulled himself hand over hand to the stern of the *Spray* and nimbly climbed on board.

"Whew!" he gasped. "That was the most wonderful bath I ever had! You ought to try it, Frank."

"I'm going to," and almost instantly Frank, too, was overboard.

Fred was next, and then the boys tried to get the skipper to do it. Tom was in the galley

cooking and consequently did not know what was occurring on deck.

"No, sir!" said Bud. "You can't get me into that water! I don't know how to swim, and, besides, I'd freeze stiff."

"Why, you don't have to swim; and the water isn't cold. Just see how warm we are. All you do is hang on to the end of the rope," protested Frank.

The skipper was not to be persuaded, however, and in a few moments Tom announced that luncheon was ready.

He had made steaks of the codfish and it was really very palatable, though none of the boys enjoyed the supper as the skipper did. He insisted that "fish was the best food in the world, and cod one of the best of fish."

"Well, it isn't really bad, cooked this way," agreed Frank. "But this is the only way I like it."

"Don't be silly, Frank," said Tom. "You know you like anything in the way of food, and if you don't stop eating so much poor John out there steering the boat won't get any."

"He doesn't deserve any. He beat me wrestling."

At length, however, even Frank had eaten all he desired or, at least, all he could dispose of. John found that there was plenty left for him, and after he and Fred had had their turn at washing the dishes all gathered on deck once more.

"As soon as we round that there point," said Bud, pointing to a wooded headland in front of them as he spoke, "you'll see Baddeck, and that is to be our next stop."

"That's where you told them to send the gasolene you ordered from Sydney, isn't it, John?" asked Tom.

"Yes, two barrels of it, and I hope it has arrived."

"Look at that house up there!" suddenly exclaimed Fred.

"That must be Doctor Alexander Graham Bell's summer home!" said John as the boys all looked at the spot indicated by their friend.

"Isn't that a wonderful location!" said Frank. "Why, he must be able to see for miles from that point. And look at that high tower on the hill above the house!"

"That is the tetrahedral tower," replied John. "I've read about some of Doctor Bell's

experiments with airships and kites and all those things, and lately he has been trying out some tetrahedral-shaped kites. Tetrahedral means four-sided, doesn't it?"

"Of course," said Frank, looking very wise.

"Just imagine," John continued, "being the man who really made the telephone what it is to-day. That seems to me one of the most marvellous things in the world. Frank, do you suppose you'll ever do anything that will make you as famous as the Bell telephone has made Doctor Bell?"

"I shall be surprised if I don't," responded Frank promptly.

Immediately his three companions leaped upon him and forced him to apologize for being so conceited. When he had retracted his words and promised "never to do it again," he was released, and slowly arose very much dishevelled.

Frank having thus been properly subdued, all eyes were once more turned shoreward.

"We'll certainly have to climb that tower," said John. "I don't believe any one would object."

The *Spray* was now in close to the shore and sailing almost under the shadow of Doctor Bell's house, which was perched high above them on the steep headland.

To their left, about two miles distant, was the village of Baddeck, looking very snug in its location among the hills.

As the *Spray* rounded the point below the house a launch put out from one of the docks ahead of them. Seated in the stern was a large, distinguished-looking man, bareheaded and with a full white beard.

"That must be Doctor Bell himself," whispered John, "and he seems to be coming out to speak to us. Bring her head up into the wind, skipper."

All of the boys were familiar with the pictures of Doctor Bell and easily recognized him as he was seated in his launch. He stood up as he approached the *Spray* and called out to those on board:

"Ahoy, there! Where is this craft from and where bound?"

"This is the *Spray*, of New York, bound for Labrador," answered John.

The launch was now alongside and words of greeting were exchanged.

Doctor Bell, by his charming personality, soon made all the boys feel at their ease, and at the end of a few minutes' chat he left, after making the boys promise to come to his house for supper that evening.

At his invitation they also made the *Spray* fast to one of the wharves and prepared to spend the night there.

As it was still quite early in the afternoon, it was decided to climb the hill and ascend the tetrahedral tower.

Accordingly, they set forth from the boat and started across the intervening fields. It was very warm walking and all were grateful when they gained the shade of some near-by woods.

Half-way through these woods, Tom, who was in the lead, flushed a bevy of partridges which scattered in all directions before him. The young birds were not yet fully grown and had difficulty in flying far, so it was an easy matter for the boys to approach and obtain a good look at them.

"My, I wouldn't mind having a couple of those to eat!" said Frank.

"Don't you ever think of anything else?" said Fred.

Soon the boys were through the woods and almost at the summit of the hill. The woods were on the slope, and to the boys, who had not had much exercise lately, it seemed a hard, hot climb.

"Here's something even better than the tower," exclaimed Frank. "Look at these wild strawberries!" and he began to pick and eat as fast as he was able.

"They certainly are good!" exclaimed John, who quickly had followed Frank's example.

All four boys instantly were busily engaged in eating the delicious wild fruit of which there was an abundance along the roadside.

After many more stops for fresh berries, they at length arrived at the tower.

"Why, it's only made of pipes and is nothing but a skeleton," said Fred. "Do you suppose it will hold us?"

"Of course it will hold us," replied John confidently. "Don't you know that things built

in this shape, with all these little squares, are very strong? Besides, do you suppose Doctor Bell would build stairs up a tower like this if it wasn't safe for people to go up them?"

"All right, then," said Fred promptly. "I'm off."

His friends followed at his heels and up, up, up they steadily made their way. Nothing but the interlacing framework of pipes was between them and the ground, which looked as it might have appeared from an aeroplane.

Finally they came to the top of the tower, where they discovered that there was a platform. The hard walk and the steep climb were well repaid by the marvellous view to be had from the place where the boys were standing.

Below them lay the Bras d'Or Lakes set in the wonderful green of the wooded islands and mainland, while for miles and miles in all directions the land stretched away before them.

Every one was too awed to speak at first, but when the boys did at last find their tongues they were not slow to express their admiration for what they saw.

"I feel as if we were on the top of the world

here," said Tom. "Just imagine that you are a king and that these lands are all your dominions. You are now standing on the highest turret of your castle."

"You're awfully sentimental all at once, Tom," said John. "We'd better start back now and get ready for supper, don't you think?"

"I don't like going down," said Frank. "It's too steep and you can see too far below."

"It's all right if you don't slip," replied Tom, as he started down ahead.

Scarcely had Tom gone a dozen steps when he slipped and, with a cry of horror, disappeared from view.

CHAPTER XIV

A GREAT INVENTOR

THE other boys were too amazed and horrified to do anything at first. Tom had fallen from sight so suddenly that no one for the moment fully realized what had happened. They stood on the platform as if they had been nailed to the board flooring, while no one said a word.

Fred was the first one to come to his senses and to recover his voice.

"He's gone," he groaned. "He's fallen down and is surely killed! What shall we do?"

The faces of all three boys were as pale as death, and the swift fate which it seemed to them must have overtaken their friend had taken away all power of thought or action.

"We must get down as quickly as we can. Perhaps he may not be killed after all," cried John in a hollow voice.

No one looked for anything as fortunate as

that, however, and it was a heavy-hearted and frightened trio that started down the steep stairs again.

They cautiously began their descent, afraid to move quickly lest they, too, should slip and fall as had their companion. To look down made them nervous, and they kept their eyes strictly on their steep pathway.

"Oh, John!"

All three stopped, scarcely believing their own ears, for it was Tom's voice calling.

"John! Frank! Here I am!" again came the welcome hail.

Looking down and almost immediately under their feet, they discovered Tom clinging to the iron framework of the tower. He was perched in the intersection of two pipes, seated upon one of them and holding to the other with both hands. He was directly beneath the stairway and not more than four or five feet under the spot where his three friends were standing.

"Tom, are you hurt?" cried John. "How did you get there?"

"Help me out of this and I'll tell you all about it later," answered Tom.

By standing on the steps and stretching forth his arms, John was able to reach Tom's outstretched hand. Fred and Frank each held firmly to John's other arm, while they in turn clutched the steps with their free hands. In this way Tom was soon assisted back to the steps from which he had plunged a few moments before, apparently to certain destruction.

Slowly the four boys made their way down the stairway and all heaved a great sigh of relief when they once more stood on the solid ground.

The strain had been terrific and it was necessary for them to sit down for a few moments before continuing their return to the *Spray*.

"You know," said Tom, "that was just about the luckiest thing that ever happened to me."

"How did you come to fall, anyway?" queried Frank.

"My heel caught on the edge of one of those steps and simply pitched me head first right off. Of course, I threw out my hands, any one unconsciously would do that, and I caught right hold of one of those pipes. I was swinging in the air for a second when I felt my foot strike another pipe below me, and all I had to do was

Tom clinging to the iron framework of the tower

to lower myself and sit on it. That's where I was when you came along."

"Whew!" gasped Fred. "That doesn't sound possible, does it?"

"If it wasn't for the fact that there are so many hundred intersecting pipes in this old tower it wouldn't have been possible, either," said John.

"Tom," sighed Frank, "you've taken ten years off my life and I think I've lost fifteen pounds."

"Well, I'm sorry about the ten years, but those fifteen pounds that are gone will do you a great deal of good," laughed Tom.

"I don't think we ought to say a word about this to Doctor Bell," he continued. "It would only worry him, and it was really my fault."

It was so agreed, and presently all the boys were making their way back to the boat.

Bud greeted them with the news that he had just received word from Baddeck that the gasolene had arrived there, so that an early start could be made the following morning.

This was welcome information as there had been much doubt expressed as to the arrival

of the fuel on time, and gasolene was indispensable to the party. It was therefore arranged that bright and early in the morning they should go to Baddeck, there load up with gasolene, and then continue on their way.

In a few moments a carriage sent by Doctor Bell arrived at the dock to convey the boys to his home for supper. All four were dressed up as much as their limited wardrobe would permit, and, quickly getting into the waiting conveyance, they were driven up the hill to the house, where Doctor Bell was waiting to greet them.

Supper was soon announced as ready, and the boys sat down to a meal such as they had not tasted since leaving home. After their simple fare on board the *Spray*, everything was delicious, and ample justice was done to it all.

"I hope we don't eat you out of house and home, Doctor Bell," suggested John at last.

"No danger of that, I guess," he replied. "It does me good to see you eat, for I appreciate a healthy appetite."

"Frank is trying to get back those fifteen pounds, I think," said Tom to Fred, who was seated next to him. "Just watch him eat."

Frank was speaking only when he was spoken to, for he was very busy the rest of the time. He refused nothing that was offered, and was attending to the business of appeasing his hunger, which appeared to be a huge task.

At length, apparently, he had overcome his craving to some extent, for he looked up from his plate and spoke to his host.

"Doctor Bell, you have some wonderful wild strawberries up on the top of the hill here. We ate quarts of them this afternoon."

"They are good, aren't they?" said Doctor Bell. "But do you know that a strawberry is not a berry? That sounds peculiar, doesn't it?"

"It certainly does."

"Well, you see," joined in Frank, "in order for a fruit to be a berry it must have its seeds on the inside of the pulp, which a strawberry has not. A banana, however, is a berry, because it does."

"That's a queer thing, and I never knew that before," said John.

"I sort of remember studying something like that in botany once," exclaimed Fred, "but I had almost forgotten it."

Supper was now over, and, withdrawing to another room, Doctor Bell entertained the boys with accounts of some of the new inventions he was at work upon at the time. The hours passed very rapidly under the spell of his interesting and instructive talk, and all too soon it was time to depart.

Good nights then were said and good-bys exchanged and good luck hoped for the voyagers.

"That was one of the best evenings I've ever spent," said Tom as the boys made their way down the hill once more.

"Isn't it wonderful!" exclaimed Fred. "I tell you, seeing a man like that, who has really accomplished something in this world, makes you realize what an awful lot there is to be done."

They discussed their experiences of the evening until all were in bed, and each one went to sleep with the firmly fixed idea that he, too, some day would be a great inventor and startle the world with his achievements.

CHAPTER XV

INGONISH

"FIVE-THIRTY! Time to get moving!"

The skipper went from one to another of the sleeping boys and aroused every one from his slumbers.

"Who is going in for a swim? I am, for one!" shouted Tom, and two minutes later he had dived from the rail of the *Spray*.

The three others quickly followed his example, and one after another the white figures jumped into the early morning waters of the lake. That the water was cold was made manifest by the yells which arose as each boy came to the surface and struck out for the boat again.

"That's the way to wake up in the morning," cried John. "Wouldn't it be great if every day you could jump out of bed right overboard into water like this?"

"You won't be so anxious to get into the

water in a few days more," put in Bud. "This water ain't half so cold as it is in Newfoundland."

"If that's the case, then we'd better get all the swims we can now," declared John.

Dressing was an easy matter on board the good ship *Spray*, and never consumed many minutes. When their simple toilets had been made the boys began at once to prepare for their departure.

Fred and John began to hoist the mainsail, while Frank and the skipper made the jib ready and then assisted Fred and John in their task. The mainsail was big and heavy, and the ropes were stiff and would have been very hard on tender hands. By this time, however, the boys' hands were becoming so toughened by exposure and hard work that what would have been agony for them at the start of their trip was now easy.

At length the sails were all set, the moorings cast off, and the *Spray* headed for Baddeck, two miles away. There was a light wind at this time of day, but what little there was was adverse, so that a short tack became necessary. In a brief time, however, they were made fast

to the wharf at Baddeck, and the two casks of gasolene were taken on board.

"The skipper said it was hard to get gasolene anywhere north of here, so I got all I could," explained John. "I don't believe the tank will hold more than one of these barrels, as there is still quite a good lot left, but we can carry the other, I guess."

John's prediction was true, for the tank would hold only the contents of one of the barrels. The other barrel, however, was rolled aboard and lashed tightly in one corner of the cockpit.

Once more the *Spray* started out, and the course was to be retraced as far as Doctor Bell's home. It was not quite eight o'clock when they again sailed below his residence and turned the point on the opposite side from where they had been moored the night before.

"Take a last look at that tower up there, Tom," said Fred. "I guess you aren't very sorry to see the last of it, either, are you?"

"No, I should think not."

"That tower is all very nice and very interesting," broke in Frank, "but what I say is,

how about something to eat? We've been up since half past five, and I'm beginning to get faint for lack of food."

"Yes, you look pretty sick," laughed Tom. "I'll go right down and start cooking something now. I'm hungry myself."

The breeze was light but favoring, and the *Spray* made good progress. The hills were high on each bank and heavily wooded.

"What do they call this arm of the lake, skipper?" asked John, coming on deck after breakfast a half hour later.

"This is the Great Bras d'Or and leads out into the ocean again."

"How soon shall we strike the ocean?"

"Some time about noon."

"Do you think we'll find any breeze out there?" said Frank. "There doesn't seem to be much here."

"Breeze!" replied the skipper. "There won't be enough breeze outside to bathe a flea."

"That would be nearly a dead calm, I should think," laughed Frank.

About noon, as Bud had predicted, the boys arrived at the northern entrance of the lake.

On one side was the open ocean, while on their left was the rugged coast of Cape Breton.

In spite of the skipper's prediction that they would find no breeze there, such a gale struck them as soon as they came to the open water that it became necessary to put a double reef in the mainsail and also one in the jigger-sail.

"I think we'd better put into Ingonish till she blows over," said Bud after a brief time had passed.

"Where?" asked John.

"Ingonish. That's a harbor just around that point yonder; it's a good shelter, and I think we'd better wait there all the afternoon, anyway, and start to cross from Cape Breton to Newfoundland about six or seven o'clock. We're more likely to get a steady breeze at night, you know, and with good luck we should see Newfoundland about daybreak."

Rounding the point that Bud had indicated, the boys soon found themselves within a narrow little harbor flanked by high and rugged cliffs.

"Pretty good-sized rocks around here, skipper," said Fred.

"Aw, they ain't nothing but pebbles to what

the' is on the Labrador," replied Bud. "The ones in Newfoundland ain't, either, though they're bigger than these."

"You can let go the anchor now," called the skipper later as he brought the *Spray* up into the wind about a quarter of a mile from the entrance of the harbor.

Tom and John let go the anchor, which they had ready poised. The chains ran out with a rattle, and the *Spray* came to a stop in the quiet waters of the well-protected little harbor.

"What is that building over there?" asked Frank, indicating a low gray structure opposite them on the shore.

"That's a lobster cannery," replied Bud.

"Do they have fresh ones there, too?"

"Certainly they do. They catch them all along the shore here, then bring 'em in and cook them and can them."

"Let's go and see if we can't buy some!" exclaimed Frank excitedly.

Fred volunteered to go with him, so the two boys lowered the life-boat and were soon ashore.

Those who were left on the *Spray* soon gathered all their soiled clothes on deck, tied strings

to them, and then hung the bundles overboard to "wash." When they considered that they had soaked them long enough they hauled them in and hung the wet garments upon different ropes on the *Spray*. This was to dry them in the wind, and soon the boat was rigged out like a decorated yacht, though instead of flags the *Spray* displayed underclothes, shirts, and socks.

Meanwhile, Fred and Frank had returned. Coming alongside the *Spray*, they unloaded twenty small lobsters from their boat to the deck.

"Where did you get them all?" gasped John. "You don't expect to eat all those, do you?"

"There are only four apiece, and they're very small, you see," said Frank. "Besides, they were only a cent each, and I had just two dimes in my pocket."

"Are they cooked?" asked Tom.

"Yes, sir! Just caught, just cooked, and just ready to be eaten," promptly answered Frank. "I'm ready to eat myself, and I say we start in with no further delays."

The lobsters were most appetizing, and every boy was soon busily engaged in extracting the

delicious meat from the shells, and, except for occasional exclamations of satisfaction, for a time there was little conversation on board the *Spray*.

CHAPTER XVI

TOWARD THE OPEN SEA

Six o'clock came, and once more the sails were hoisted, the anchor was weighed, and the *Spray* glided out of the harbor to continue her voyage.

At eight o'clock all turned in except John and Fred, who were to be on duty until midnight. John steered the boat while Fred took up his position at the bow as lookout.

The night was bitterly cold, and both boys were bundled up in all the clothes they could secure. Fred had on two sweaters, an overcoat, and over that an oilskin coat. The wind from off the ocean cut almost like a knife, and even through all these garments the air was cold. There was a new moon, and the stars shone as only a clear, cold night can make them shine.

"Say, John," called Fred, "it's a good thing we brought these oilskins along! I believe they're warmer than anything else we've got."

"They certainly are. That's what the skipper told us, you know, and I think the reason is because they are almost air-tight and keep the wind out."

"Well, they can't keep out too much air to suit me to-night."

The skipper had set the course, and consequently it was an easy matter for John to follow it.

"Have you noticed," said John to Fred, who, after a moment, had come aft, "what has been our general direction since leaving New York?"

"North, of course."

"Not so much north as east. It seems queer, doesn't it, but we have gone more east than north all the way."

"That doesn't seem right. We are going toward Labrador, and that is certainly north of New York. Why don't we sail north?"

"I know it," said John; "but you look at the chart and you'll find I'm right. You see, we have to sail around Nova Scotia and Cape

Breton, and in order to do that we had to go almost due east a good part of the time. I was looking at the chart to-day after I had noticed the compass."

"You'd better loosen that topping-lift a little, Fred."

This command was soon carried out and Fred resumed his watch. Not a vessel was seen in any direction during the watch before twelve o'clock, and it was with a feeling of relief that Fred then went below to summon Frank and the skipper.

"It gets monotonous when nothing happens," he explained to John.

Below, however, there was plenty that was "happening." Tom was standing by the side of Frank's bunk and appeared to be much worried.

"Look here, Fred!" he called. "Frank is awfully sick, and I don't know what to do for him."

"He's not seasick, is he?"

"I don't think so. But look at him!"

Frank was groaning and writhing as if he was in great pain. He was also deathly pale, and

any remark addressed to him merely brought forth a louder groan.

The skipper appeared at this moment, and after one look at the sufferer he merely grunted: "Too much lobster!"

"Why, of course! I never thought of that!" cried Tom.

"The chump ate about five of them, didn't he?" asked Fred. "It really serves him right, though I hope he hasn't been poisoned."

"No danger of that," said Bud. "Them little chicken lobsters was fresh, all right, but the meat is awful rich, and I guess he just ate too much."

"What shall we do for him? I don't like to see a fellow suffer like this," said Tom anxiously.

"Don't do nothing for him. He'll be all right in the morning, and nature will look out for him. You'll have to take his place on deck, Tom."

Fred and John quickly turned in after drawing lots to see who should be on duty after four o'clock with the skipper. That Frank was available was clearly out of the question.

It fell to Fred to relieve Tom, and it seemed

to him that he barely had fallen asleep when again he was summoned.

"Look over there, Fred!" said Bud, pointing over the starboard bow. "That's Newfoundland."

Fred rubbed his eyes sleepily and looked in the direction indicated by the skipper. The sun was coming up and the night mists were scattering before its rays. The sea was like a huge caldron, full of orange and red fire, and it was hard for Fred to make out anything at all at first.

Suddenly, however, the mist parted, and surely enough there was Newfoundland, far away. Great rocky cliffs and headlands stood out in the early morning light, and little shivers shot up and down Fred's spine.

So this was really Newfoundland! It had always seemed to him so distant, and yet here it was at last, reached in a forty-foot yawl, sailed by a crew of boys. How far from home he was! thought Fred, and for a moment a tinge of homesickness swept over him.

He quickly dispelled this feeling, however, and, drawing a deep breath of the cold air into

his lungs, he squared his shoulders and held up his head.

This was life, he told himself. This was what he had always wanted to do. And now, here he was! A thrill passed through him and he laughed aloud with the sheer joy of being alive and where he was.

"Isn't it wonderful!" he cried to the skipper.

"It is wonderful," said Bud. "That's my country," the skipper added simply.

The *Spray* drew nearer and nearer to the land, and when breakfast was ready they were sailing along under the projecting cliffs. All day long they travelled almost under the overhanging rocks, and later, when evening approached, they came to a harbor.

"This is St. George's Bay," said Bud. "There ain't no shelter in here, but I guess we will have a quiet night, and it will be all right."

"This isn't really a harbor, is it?" asked John.

"Well," answered Bud, "it is and it isn't. The entrance is so wide that the sea can sweep right in, but it is a sort of inlet, and they call it a bay."

"There's a little settlement up ahead there!" exclaimed Tom.

"Yes," answered Bud. "That's Robinson's Head, and is where we're going."

"Poor old Frank!" broke in John. "He feels pretty low, doesn't he?"

"He certainly does," said Tom. "But you know he insists he was poisoned, and that it is ridiculous to say he ate too much."

"He wouldn't ever admit that."

As the young sailors came nearer the shore dories put out to meet them, and scarcely had the anchor been dropped before a crowd of curious natives swarmed aboard. The skipper, as usual in a situation like this, took great delight in showing off the *Spray*. He boasted as much as he dared, and sly winks were exchanged by the boys, who overheard some of his yarns as to the boat's prowess.

An hour or two passed in welcoming their visitors, and all were so absorbed in what they were doing that no one on board the *Spray* had noticed the black clouds piling up in the western sky.

Tom was the first to notice them.

"Look there, skipper!" he cried. "I'm afraid your prediction about a quiet night was wrong."

"I guess it was!" exclaimed Bud. "This is no place for us to be caught in a storm, either. We'd soon be pounded right on the rocks."

"But what can we do?" asked John.

"We'll put right out to sea, and then we can't run ashore on nothing. It's not very safe there, but it's better than this."

Rumblings of thunder could now be heard, and little flashes of lightning frequently sparkled in the inky blackness of the approaching storm.

"Get that anchor up! Get the kicker going! We've got to get out of here in a hurry!" the skipper cried.

His commands were quickly obeyed, and in less than five minutes the *Spray* was headed for the open ocean. The storm was not far away now, and little gusts of wind were stirring up whitecaps on the crests of the waves. Darkness was fast coming on, and it was in no cheerful frame of mind that the crew of the *Spray* watched themselves being driven into what seemed to them to be the very heart of the storm.

CHAPTER XVII

THE PLACE OF SAFETY

RAIN was now falling—great spattering drops at first, but the downpour was becoming more and more steady. The lightning played over their heads, while the roll of the thunder grew louder and nearer.

"Don't you think we ought to take in some of this sail, skipper?" asked John anxiously. "The wind is getting pretty strong."

"Not yet. We want to get as far out as we can, and we'll leave all the canvas up until we really strike the storm."

The *Spray* was headed directly for the open sea, and to the boys it seemed a strange manœuvre.

"Why do we go out in a storm?" asked Fred of his companions. "It seems to me that the ocean is not the place to go in a storm like this."

"That's what I think, too," said Tom. "Per-

sonally, I'd rather risk my life close to shore than out in the middle of the ocean. We could at least get ashore from where we were, but if anything happens out here we wouldn't stand a ghost of a chance."

"I know it," said Tom, "but I guess after all the skipper understands his business. I suppose his idea is that if we get out in the ocean we can't run ashore or be driven upon a rock. He doesn't want to lose the boat, and he thinks we can weather the storm."

"Stand by to lower sail!" shouted Bud from the wheel.

John was below, in charge of the engine, which still was to be kept running. The other three boys instantly sprang to their places at the ropes at the call of the skipper.

It was almost pitch-dark now, and it was not an easy task to make one's way about the boat, which was being severely tossed by the waves.

"All ready!" called Bud. "Let 'er go!"

At the word the big mainsail came down with a rush and was quickly furled by the boys, who were now experts in this work. The jib was next to be lowered, and then the jigger. In a

very few minutes the *Spray* was under bare poles, propelled only by the small auxiliary engine, which stood nobly to its task.

"That's good work, and quick work, too," commented Bud. "I'll make sailors out of you boys yet."

"Think we're all right, skipper?" anxiously asked Fred.

"I don't like the look of things very much, but we'll get through all right, I guess."

The waves steadily were mounting higher and higher. The *Spray* was not long enough to span two waves and consequently was one moment high on the crest of a huge roller and the next was engulfed in the hollow between.

Water was breaking over the bow continuously. The boat heeled so that the water poured in over the lee rail.

"You'd better go forward and see if that hatch is all right," the skipper called to Fred.

Almost on his stomach Fred crawled to the bow, where he examined the box-like covering called the hatch, which furnished light and air to the bunk that was under the bowsprit.

"She's leaking a little, skipper," he reported

upon his return. "I think one of those big waves knocked her a little loose."

"You'd better crawl up front to the bunk and find out, then. If water is coming in stuff a cushion or a pillow or something into the hole."

Once more Fred made his way forward, this time through the galley. As the boat pitched and rolled he was thrown from side to side, and while passing through the galley a plate suddenly shot from one of the shelves, narrowly missing his head.

Fred dropped to his hands and knees as he reached the forward bunk. It was so dark that he was not able to see any of the objects in the tiny room now, and he was compelled to feel his way about. As the *Spray* mounted each wave the bow was lifted high in the air. In descending the bow came down with a rush and struck the water with a report that at times sounded almost like a rifle-shot.

This all seemed to Fred to be directly beneath him as he crouched in the darkness. Every wave broke over the bow of the boat, and a deluge of water followed through the leaking hatchway, drenching the young sailor.

At length he discovered the leak, however, and succeeded in stuffing a blanket into the hole so that at least a part of the water was kept out. The noise of the water pounding against the *Spray* and the exploding engine produced an unbroken din in his ears.

He made his way back and reported to the skipper that he had succeeded in his mission. On the way out he passed John bending over the engine, watching it as a cat does a mouse.

"How's she running, John?" he asked.

"All right now, Fred, but I want to keep her running right, too. If anything happens to the engine now we'd be in a sorry fix; so I'm keeping my eye right on it."

Fred speedily found Frank, Tom, and the skipper, who were all seated in the cockpit. Bud, was still at the wheel. Oilskin trousers, coats, and hats made them almost indistinguishable as they sat there huddled together.

"Hallo, Fred!" they greeted him. "Have any trouble?"

"Plenty of it," replied Fred. "But it's all right now."

"The skipper thinks," said Frank, "that the worst is almost over, and that the storm won't last very much longer."

"That's right," said Bud. "This ain't no gale, but only a bad squall, and we ought to be out of it soon."

"Thank goodness for that!" responded Fred. "I don't care much for a storm on the ocean when I'm in a boat of this size."

The wind still shrieked about them, however, and the lightning was still very sharp.

"When you were below, Fred," said Tom, "there was an awful flash. I never saw a worse one. It seemed to hit the water just over the side here, and honestly we were nearly blinded for a few seconds. Everything looked red."

"It made no impression on me," replied Fred. "It was so dark down there where I was, and the water and the engine made so much noise that I couldn't see or hear a thing."

"I confess I don't like thunder-storms," said Frank.

"Nor I either," put in Bud. "A schooner I shipped on once had her mainmast splintered

by lightning while I was on watch, and it knocked me unconscious."

"That's too close for comfort," said Tom. "I do believe it's not raining as hard as it was," he continued.

This statement was soon found to be true, and little by little the wind also subsided. It was now past midnight, but no one had expressed the least desire to go to bed while the storm lasted. The waves were still high, for a heavy sea had been kicked up, and the skipper foretold that the water would not be quiet again for twelve hours.

"You all go to bed now," Bud said. "All but John. I am going to keep her headed as she is now for a while longer. It's too black to see where we are, and I don't want to run the risk of running into another storm. They often travel in pairs, you know."

The storm was undoubtedly abating, and all the boys except John soon turned in and were quickly fast asleep.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SHORE OF NEWFOUNDLAND

MORNING came at last and once more the sun appeared. No land was to be seen from the deck of the *Spray*, for she had travelled many miles the preceding night.

"We want to get to Bay of Islands," said Bud. "I don't know where it is from here, for I followed no special course last night."

"If we go straight back we'll at least come to Newfoundland again, won't we?" asked John.

"Yes," replied Bud, "and that's about all we can do. We are headed that way now. Run up the sails," he continued. "The kicker has been running for a long while now, and we don't want to use no more gasolene than we have to."

"Yes," said John, "and I'm so tired I can't see. The skipper and I have been up all night,

and if he feels the way I do he wants to go to sleep."

"John and I will turn in," said Bud. "I'm going to leave the boat in charge of you three boys, and I want you to call me as soon as we get within a mile or so of land."

The engine was stopped and the sails were hoisted. Tom took the wheel, with Frank and Fred as crew, while John and the skipper lost no time in crawling into their bunks to enjoy a well-earned sleep.

"That storm didn't turn out as badly as it threatened, did it?" remarked Frank.

"No," said Tom, "it didn't. I admit I was scared though when we started for the open ocean last night. It certainly looked bad."

"You know, I've decided," broke in Fred, "that that is usually the case."

"What's usually the case?" asked Tom.

"Why, that nothing is really so bad as it looks. When you look ahead you think things are going to be terrible, but when you get nearer to them they never turn out to be half as bad as you expect."

"Say, Tom," said Frank, "what do you think

of Fred as a philosopher? I never realized that he knew so much, did you?"

"No, Frank, I never even suspected him. He is a pretty smart sort of a fellow, isn't he? Don't you remember, at Doctor Bell's house, how he said he remembered having studied in botany that a strawberry was not a berry?"

"Oh, he knows a great deal about almost everything you can mention," said Frank.

"Look here, you two!" exclaimed Fred. "You may think you can jolly me, but if you'd take a little more serious view of life you'd both be better off. What I said is true."

"Yes, Fred, you're right," said Frank. "In fact, you're always right."

"You both make me sick!" snapped Fred. "All Frank thinks about in life is eating, and all Tom thinks about is athletics. I like those things, too; but they're not the only things in the world, and the sooner you find it out the better it will be for you."

"That's the truth, Fred," said Tom more seriously. "I know that what you say is perfectly right."

"There's land yonder!" abruptly exclaimed Frank.

Far ahead of them and low on the horizon there appeared a faint dark streak. It was the coast of Newfoundland, and as they came nearer and nearer they could see before them the great frowning cliffs and the rocky promontories.

"Isn't this a barren-looking shore?" said Tom.

"I should say so!" replied Fred. "I don't see how anybody can get a living out of that soil."

"The skipper says they don't," said Tom. "Every one up here is either a fisherman or a sailor, and some years when the fishing is poor they almost starve to death. Imagine what the winters must be up here!"

There was a light mist along the shore and the wind had become very light.

"I think we might as well call the skipper now," said Tom. "Go down and wake him, will you, Frank?"

Bud soon appeared on deck in response to Frank's summons, and after a look at the rocky shore announced that Bay of Islands was about twenty miles north along the coast.

"With a breeze like this we won't get there till nearly dark, though," he remarked.

"This does seem mild after last night, doesn't it?" said Fred.

"Yes, indeed," answered Frank. "I like this better, though, I think. How about some luncheon, Tom?"

"All right. I'll go right down and get it now."

John was still asleep, and no one called him for luncheon, all thinking that he would enjoy his rest even more.

The *Spray* moved slowly along in the light breeze while the crew slept or read.

"This is what they call a white-ash breeze," remarked Bud after luncheon.

"What is that?" queried Fred.

"Why, you see, oars are made from white-ash trees usually, and in a breeze like this you need oars to get anywhere, so they call it a white-ash breeze."

The *Spray* made fair progress, however, and about five o'clock rounded the cliffs at the entrance to the Bay of Islands, and then, proceeding about two miles up the bay, dropped anchor off the small town.

"Why, there's a railroad train!" exclaimed Fred as an engine pulling several cars came puffing along the shore.

"Yes," said Bud, "that's the train what runs from St. John's."

"It seems queer to see one up here, doesn't it?"

"Look here!" the skipper protested, "New York ain't the only place where they have things! Newfoundland has got some things, too."

"Of course it has," replied Fred, who had no wish to hurt the skipper's feelings. "Only I wasn't expecting to see one, and it surprised me."

"Where's the Humber River from here?" asked Tom.

"Right around that point of woods," said Bud. "About half a mile from here is the entrance."

"That's fine! I'm going to get out my fishing-rod and flies to-night so that I'll be all ready in the morning."

"How long do you boys expect to be up there fishing?" asked Bud.

"We don't know," answered John. "We are

going to start up-stream and stay until we get tired, or until we catch all the fish," he added with a wink at Fred.

"You'll not catch all the fish, I guess. You'll want a boat to go up in, I suppose?"

"Yes, we shall. Can you get us one?"

"I know a man who lives right over on that shore," said Bud, pointing to a small house in the distance as he spoke. "He probably will let you have a dory. I'll go over there the first thing in the morning."

The evening was spent in preparations for the start of the following day. Trout rods and flies were dug out from under bunks, blankets were rolled up to carry, and their tent also was made ready. Pots and pans were selected to be taken with them, and the evening was full of anticipation.

"Who'll sleep on deck with me to-night?" asked Tom. "I'm getting the camping fever and I want to sleep out-of-doors."

The three other boys were of the same mind, and soon they had transferred mattresses and blankets to the deck and prepared to turn in.

Just as they were about to crawl under their

blankets, Bud, who had been ashore to visit an acquaintance, arrived in the life-boat. Almost with consternation the skipper viewed the preparations of the boys for sleeping on the open deck.

"What you going to do?" he demanded.

"Sleep on deck to-night," explained John.

"Oh, are you? Let's see," he said quizzically, "the wind is offshore, isn't it? Well, I hope you sleep well; but I'd like to bet that not one of you stays here all night."

"Why not?" asked Tom.

"You'll find out before long," remarked the skipper with a grin as he went below.

CHAPTER XIX

UP THE HUMBER

NONE of the boys had the least idea what the skipper meant when he said they would not remain long on deck.

"What do you suppose he was talking about?" asked Frank.

"I'm sure I don't know," answered Tom; "but, anyway, he can't scare me, and I intend to stay where I am."

The other boys were of the same mind, and it was not long before they all were rolled in their blankets and were fast asleep.

They had slept perhaps a half-hour when Fred suddenly awoke. He looked sharply at John, who was next to him, and discovered that his friend's eyes, too, were open.

"Say, John," exclaimed Fred, "something is biting me. What do you suppose it is."

"I don't know," John replied, "but some-

thing is biting me, too. Do you think it can be mosquitoes?"

At this moment Tom and Frank also awoke and commenced slapping their heads and necks as hard as they were able.

All four boys quickly sat erect. It was so dark they could not discover the cause of their annoyance, but fierce bites on every exposed part of their bodies drove them nearly frantic.

"This is terrible!" exclaimed Fred. "I'm not going to stand it any longer."

"Yes, and the skipper will have a fine laugh at our expense!" said Tom.

"I don't care! I can't stand this!" and Fred swung his arms wildly about his head in a vain effort to drive away his tormentors, whatever they were.

"What's the matter?" asked Bud a few minutes later when all four boys came trooping into the cabin with their blankets under their arms.

"Just go up on deck for a second and you'll soon find out," said John. "We were almost bitten to death by some sort of bugs."

The skipper laughed. "Those are black flies," he said. "The wind blew them out from

shore to-night, and I knew you'd get them. They bite like fiends. There ain't nothing worse, and I didn't think you'd stand it very long."

"They are terrible!" agreed Frank as he rubbed his face and neck ruefully where great red welts were beginning to appear.

"Shall we have them up the Humber River, Bud?" asked Tom.

"You will, and every other kind of bug in the world, too," promptly declared Bud.

"That's bad news."

"They won't bother you much except after dark, though; and your tent is fly-proof, isn't it?"

"Yes," said John, "and we ought to thank our lucky stars that it is."

"I don't believe the flies will bother you down here," said Bud. "You'd better go to bed and get some sleep."

When the boys awoke in the morning they found Bud had already gone ashore. Before they had finished breakfast he arrived with a big dory in tow, and in a brief time the work of loading it was begun.

The tent was stowed on board, blankets were

packed, fishing-rods, trout flies, and a small rifle belonging to John were all made ready to be taken along. Everything was arranged in the course of a half-hour, and then the dory was started on her trip up the river.

"Look out for whirlpools, boys!" called Bud. "The river is full of them and the water is very swift everywhere! I don't want nothing to happen to you, you know."

"We'll be careful," shouted John. "Don't worry about us."

"We can sail as far as the mouth of the river, I think," suggested Tom. "Let's put up the sail."

Accordingly the tiny mast was fastened in its socket, the sail was hoisted, and fair progress was made until they reached the Humber. When they were once on the river itself, however, the sail again was taken in and the oars were used.

"Look over there on that rock!" cried Frank, excitedly pointing toward the shore. "What is that thing?"

All eyes instantly were turned in the direction he had indicated.

"That's a seal," said Tom.

"A 'seal'?" ejaculated Frank.

"Yes," Tom explained, "that's a seal. Bud told me that the seals go up this river after the fish, and the game warden shoots every one he can. They eat enormous quantities of fish, and the fishermen don't want them in here."

"But that thing is red!" Frank persisted.

"That's only the carcass," said John. "I guess the warden shot the seal and skinned it and left the body behind him."

"You're right, John," said Tom.

"Of course I'm right. I always am."

"Say," said Fred, "I'm getting a little tired of hearing you people talk while I sit here and row. The current is getting swifter all the time, and trying to make headway against it is no joke."

"Let me try awhile," offered Tom.

The boys exchanged places and Tom tugged away at the oars for a few moments. The current, however, was very strong, and the boys soon decided to go over to the bank and tow the boat by hand.

This scheme worked better, and while Tom and Frank grasped the painter and pulled the

boat through the shallow water Fred and John stood up in the dory and poled with their oars.

Fair progress was made, but the work was hard, and when noon came every one was very willing to stop for rest.

"This river is a terror, isn't it?" said Fred. "Just look at the water fly along."

"Wait till we start down again, though!" exclaimed Frank. "All we'll have to do then will be to sit in the stern and steer. I offer myself for that job."

"That's awfully good of you, Frank," laughed Tom. "You always were fond of work."

"No one can say I loafed this morning, by golly!" Frank retorted. "Look at my hands! They're just covered with blisters!"

"If you'd done more work on the *Spray* your hands would have got tough and you wouldn't be blistered now," Tom suggested.

"You think you're funny, don't you?" Frank snapped.

"Come on, Frank, don't get mad!" said Tom good-naturedly. "You know we like to tease you, and I must admit that you did work hard this morning."

After luncheon the young voyagers once more resumed their journey up the river, and continued on their way until nearly nightfall. It was a fight for them all the way, and their progress was slow, but at the end of the day they figured that ten miles must have been covered.

"There's a fine place to camp!" John exclaimed. "Right over on that point!"

His suggestion was quickly followed, and in a brief time they landed at the place which John had suggested. It was, indeed, an ideal spot.

John and Tom had been camping before, but to the others the experience was decidedly novel.

A fire speedily was started, the tent set up, and all the boys worked with an energy that only enthusiasm could arouse. Their tent was pitched on a point jutting out from a small bay, and not thirty feet away was the river. Wood was plentiful, and everything they needed seemed to be at hand."

"This is life!" exclaimed Fred as the young campers were seated around a blazing fire of

birch logs. "This is worth sailing all the way from New York for! To-morrow I expect to catch most of the trout in the Humber River."

"You'll get fooled, my boy," said Frank. "I am the one who is going to catch not only the most fish but the largest one as well."

"Come to bed, you two, and stop your boasting," Tom called from the flap of the tent.

No one offered any objections to the proposal, and after the fire had been extinguished so that there would be no danger from sparks all four went to bed in order to be ready for a full day's fishing on the morrow.

CHAPTER XX

THE CAMP ON THE RIVER

THE camp was pitched where the breeze had full sweep, and consequently flies were not frequently in evidence. The tent was fly-proof, and all the boys were pleasantly surprised by their freedom from the little pests.

"The skipper was fooled about the flies, all right," said Tom when they were rolling themselves in their blankets for the night.

"It looks so, doesn't it?" replied John.

"There may be no flies," said Frank, "but there is a root right in the middle of my back."

"Don't let that bother you," laughed Fred. "It would take more than a root to keep me awake, anyway."

"Perhaps it's soft wood, Frank," suggested Tom.

"Look, here," answered Frank, "it's bad

enough to have to sleep on this rough ground without having to listen to your jokes, too!"

In spite of the hardness of their beds the boys did not remain awake long, and soon the only sound to be heard from the tent was the regular and deep breathing of the young sportsmen.

Tom was the first one to awake in the morning. He crawled out from beneath his blanket quietly, and, grasping his trout rod in one hand, he stole out of the tent. It was his plan to be the first one to catch any fish, and he had been worried for fear that he should not be the first to awaken.

It still was very early and the light was dim. Tom affixed a bright fly to his line and took his stand on the bank in front of the tent. The current was very swift here as it swept past the point, and the place seemed an ideal one for trout.

Tom cast into the water, and scarcely had the fly touched the surface before there was a tug at his line. There was a brief struggle, and then a glistening trout weighing a half pound soon lay on the grass.

When the trout had been removed from the hook Tom made ready for another cast. He raised the rod above his head and drew back his arm.

Suddenly from the water, almost at his feet, appeared a large, dark shape. It rose from the water, and with a snort lifted its round head and looked all about.

Tom's hair almost stood on end, and cold shivers ran up and down his spine. In the semidarkness of the early morning most objects appear distorted, and for him to see a great, dark animal suddenly emerge from the stream almost under his feet was enough to cause the startled boy to jump.

Immediately, however, Tom was aware that it was a seal which had so frightened him. The seal was even more alarmed than Tom, from all appearances, for after one startled glance at the stranger on the shore it dived beneath the surface and disappeared from sight.

The three other boys emerged from the tent at this moment.

"Why, Tom, what's the matter? You look as if you'd seen a ghost!" exclaimed John.

"I thought I had for a second, but it was only a seal," explained Tom, as he related what had just occurred.

"A thing like that would have taken at least ten years off my life," said Frank soberly. "I'd like to have been here just the same."

The camp-fire was now lighted, while Fred and John stood on the bank and fished; Frank was standing between his companions and the fire, while Tom, as usual, was cook. The trout were small, but they were plentiful, and it was not difficult for the young fishermen to land many of them.

Whenever John or Fred caught one he swung back his rod and line with the trout still fast to the hook, Frank removed the fish, cleaned it, then passed it on to Tom, who placed it in the hot pan, where he fried the tempting fish in corn-meal.

"This is the best system I've ever seen," said Tom. "We don't waste any time here, do we?"

"I should say not!" Frank exclaimed. "I was just timing the whole operation. It took exactly five minutes from the time that fish

was swimming in the river till it was eaten by me."

"Here's one for you, John," said Tom. "Excuse my fingers."

Each boy received a fried trout in turn and ate it almost as he would have eaten a sandwich, holding it in his hands.

After breakfast the campers took their boat and rowed to a stream a half-mile or more distant. Leaving the boat at the mouth, they then took their rods and started up the river.

The boys walked along the shore, where they frequently were compelled to clamber over huge rocks. It was hard travelling in places, for in order to advance they were compelled to make détours through the dense woods. The rods frequently caught in the branches or bushes, and, as each boy had but one arm free, it was most difficult for him to make progress.

Fred and Tom were in the lead, and after walking about a mile they came to a waterfall. Under the falls was a deep pool, and here they decided to fish.

They had little luck at first and had almost decided to move on when Fred suddenly felt a

tug on his line. He had cast out many times before, but had not even had a rise, and by this time he was losing interest.

This strike did not seem very promising, and he began to reel in carelessly. Suddenly his line ran out with such a rush that the reel sang. Fred hastily stood up on the rock, full of excitement.

Back and forth across the pool went the trout, Fred trying in vain to check its rushes.

"Careful, Fred!" called Tom, who had stopped his own fishing when he became aware that Fred had hooked something big. "Keep the line taut!" he shouted. "Don't let him jump!"

Hardly had he said this when the fish leaped high out of the water in an attempt to dislodge the hook which seemed to hold him so firmly.

"That's not a trout! It's a whale!" Tom cried. "Don't lose him, Fred! Don't lose him!"

Fred's face was white and set. He was unconscious of everything but the fight he was having to land his prize.

The fish's struggles gradually were becoming

feebler. Its rushes were shorter, and, barring accidents, it seemed certain that soon Fred would land it.

"Get the net, Tom! Quick! Bring it over to me!" he called, speaking for the first time.

Tom seized the net and hurried toward his friend. John and Frank appeared at the same moment and instantly shouted their encouragement to Fred.

The fish was now close to the rock upon which Fred was standing. It could plainly be seen as, still full of fight, it continued to struggle for its life. Its strength was almost gone, however, and it seemed to be only a matter of seconds before it would be captured.

Fred held his rod in his left hand and the net in his right. He drew the fish as near to the rock as he was able and then leaned far forward to slip the net under his victim.

As he made this effort, suddenly he lost his balance. His foot slipped and a moment later Fred was floundering in the icy waters of the pool.

CHAPTER XXI

THE BIG FISH

INSTANTLY all was confusion. Fred clung desperately to the rod with his left hand and still grasped the net in his right. The pool was quite deep, and in his frantic efforts to keep afloat the struggling boy churned and beat the water into foam.

Tom, Frank, and John all rushed to his assistance at once.

"Give me your hand, Fred!" called Tom.

Fred extended his right hand, the net still held by the handle, which Tom excitedly grasped, and, with the assistance of the others, he soon drew the dripping boy upon the rock once more.

"Hand me the rod, quick!" cried John.

He did not wait for an answer but snatched the rod and began to reel in the line.

"He's gone!"

"Are you sure?" asked Frank.

"Look!" said John dolefully, as he lifted the bare hook from the water for the others to see.

"That is certainly a shame!" cried Frank. "How big was he, Fred?"

"Big enough to pull me off the rock."

"That doesn't necessarily mean he was very big, though," said Frank, with a wink at the others.

"Too bad, Fred," said Tom. "I saw him, and he was certainly a beauty. What a fight he gave you!"

"Yes, he did," replied Fred. "I'm sorry to lose him, but I suppose I've no one to blame but myself; I'm so clumsy."

"Well, there's one thing sure," said Frank, "and that is that Fred has ruined the fishing in this pool for the morning. I think it must be nearly time to eat, too. What do you say to our starting back again?"

All agreed to the suggestion and at once started to retrace their steps to the place where their boat had been left. At every promising pool they stopped and tried one or two casts. Luck was fair, so that by the time they arrived

at the boat there had been a good string of fish caught.

Pots and pans were taken from the dory, and the odor of frying trout and bacon soon made the boys realize how hungry they were. Fried potatoes, rice, and tea were prepared in addition to the fish, and no one left a crumb uneaten.

"We'll all get fat if we don't stop eating so much," said Fred, after they had finished their repast.

"Not if we walk and row and work as hard every day as we have the last two," replied Tom.

"I'm getting so husky," said Frank, "that by the time I get home I'll be able to whip my weight in wildcats."

"You've certainly got a good imagination, Frank," laughed John. "Why, your weight in wildcats would mean about fifty animals."

"Be a little careful, there, John, my son," replied Frank with a threatening air. "Don't you remember how I pinned your narrow shoulders to the mat on the *Spray* a while ago?"

"No, I don't remember that part of it," John answered.

"If I hadn't eaten so much I'd soon show you," said Frank. "As it is, I'll let you off for a little while longer."

"It's three o'clock already," broke in Tom. "What do you say to just going back to the tent and fooling around there the rest of the afternoon?"

"That suits me," said Frank.

John and Fred also agreed, so it was decided not to fish any more that afternoon. Their possessions were put into the dory again and the start was made for the camp.

"You ought to have brought your rifle this morning, John," said Fred. "We might see something to shoot along here."

"I did bring it."

"From the appearance of the country we have passed through so far, I don't believe there is much to shoot at on this river," said Tom.

"Look!" cried Fred suddenly. "What's that?"

He pointed excitedly to a spot about one hundred yards in advance and near the shore.

"Where?" said Tom. "I don't see anything."

"I do!" exclaimed John. "Quick, Tom, hand me the gun!"

"It's a dog," said Frank.

"Dog nothing!" whispered Fred. "What do you think a dog would be doing swimming up this river?"

"It's an otter," said John, grasping the rifle and raising it to his shoulder as he spoke.

"Of course, that's what it must be!" exclaimed Fred. "There he is, John! Do you still see him?"

John took careful aim at the small brown head appearing above the water.

"Shoot, John! Be quick or he'll dive!" urged Tom.

There was a sharp report, a splash, and the head instantly disappeared from sight.

"Did I get him?" eagerly inquired John.

"I don't think so, John. I believe you hit the water just in front of him, and he dived," answered Fred.

"There he is again!" cried Frank. "'Way up ahead there!"

Sure enough, the otter, apparently untouched, was swimming as if for dear life. He was now

on the opposite side of the river, and must have swum at least two hundred yards under water.

Again John fired, but a splash where the bullet struck the water showed that his aim still was poor. Once more the otter disappeared beneath the surface, and was not seen again.

"That's tough!" exclaimed Tom. "I wish you could have hit him, John! I wouldn't mind taking home an otter skin."

"It just proves this," said Fred, "that shooting at wild animals is not like firing at a target."

"Can't fool you, can they, Fred?" said Frank solemnly.

"Keep quiet and let me finish, will you? I mean that you only get about one shot at an animal. A target will stay where it is until you hit it, but, unless you get an animal with the first shot, you don't stand much chance of getting another shot at him."

"That's right, Fred," said John. "I had an easy shot, too, and ought to have hit him."

"There's the tent!" exclaimed Tom, as the boys rounded a wooded point. "It seems almost like home, doesn't it?"

"Yes, and I'm tired," said Frank. "This

has been a pretty strenuous day, and I want a rest."

The boat soon was beached and drawn part way up on shore. The boys disembarked and unloaded their cooking utensils and rods.

The afternoon was waning, anyway, and no effort was made to do much more fishing. Fred caught a few trout for Tom to cook for supper and then joined the other boys who were lying about on the ground outside the tent.

The day had been warm and there was only a little breeze. Supper was finished early, and immediately afterward the boys turned in, each thoroughly fagged out by the exciting experiences of the day.

CHAPTER XXII

A WEIRD CRY

It must have been nearly midnight when Frank awoke. He had an indistinct sensation of having heard some one calling him.

He quietly sat up in his blankets and peered about the tent. Three dark mounds showed that his companions were still asleep. Perhaps he had been mistaken, after all, he thought.

Suddenly he heard the strange sound again. It was from the direction of the river, and some one there must be in great danger, he thought. The voice sounded also as if the person was in pain, or terrified, and was in despair of ever getting out of the trouble into which he had fallen.

A cold shiver ran up and down Frank's spine. Instantly there flashed through his mind the stories Bud had told him of people that had been caught in the rapids and whirlpools of the

Humber. One whole boat-load had been sucked beneath the swirling waters and never heard of again, the skipper had said.

The cry was repeated. It was blood-curdling, and Frank shook with nervousness and fear. Perhaps it was the ghost of one of those men drowned near by, years ago. No, it sounded real enough, he hastily concluded; though whoever was calling must be crazed from fright, for it seemed to Frank that the voice half laughed this time.

From the wild cry Frank concluded that the unknown man was in desperate need of assistance, and in spite of his anxiety he decided to act at once. He shook Tom, who was sleeping next to him.

"Wake up!" he whispered, as Tom moved drowsily. "Wake up!"

From the tone of Frank's voice Tom knew that something was wrong. He quickly sat up wide awake.

"There's some one out on the river in trouble, and he's calling for help," said Frank. "Hear that!" he gasped, as once more the cry sounded through the night.

"Come along!" said Tom. "We must go out and see what we can do. Don't wake the others. Two of us will be enough."

Carefully the two boys stole out of the tent and noiselessly ran to the place where their boat was beached. Tom took the oars, and when Frank had pushed off he began to row in the direction from which the voice came. Twice more they had heard it, and now it sounded farther away.

"Perhaps some one is caught in the rapids and his boat has upset," Frank said.

"I don't know," replied Tom. "All we can do is to follow the voice as well as we can."

The swift-running waters took their boat and bore them down-stream in spite of their frantic efforts. The voice now was on the opposite side of the river, and, as fast as they were able, they made for the direction from which it seemed to come.

Suddenly the voice sounded directly above their heads. A wild, maniacal laugh it seemed, and the boys' hair almost stood on end. They were weak with terror, for what kind of a person was this that was first in the river and then in the air above them.

Wings flapped close over them, and a dark blur sped past the dory.

Tom laughed nervously.

"We're awful fools," he said at last.

"What's the matter?"

"We've been chasing a loon all over the river. That voice came from the bird that just flew over our heads, and we didn't have sense enough to know it."

"Of course it did!" Frank instantly responded. "I've heard hundreds of stories about loons, and here I get fooled by one just the way all the crowds of other people were."

"We mustn't let the other fellows ever hear of this," said Tom. "If they should ever find out how we were fooled, they'd never stop teasing us."

"Let's hope we can sneak back to bed without waking them. Pull on your left oar, Tom. There's the tent right over there."

By keeping close inshore as much as possible they avoided many of the swift places in the stream, and at length they successfully returned to the camp.

Feeling very sheepish, and sneaking in like two thieves, they succeeded in stepping over

their sleeping companions without awakening them.

"You know," said John next morning, "I dreamed last night that some one walked right over me when I was asleep."

"Nonsense!" remarked Tom, trying to appear unconcerned. "How could such a thing happen without waking you?"

"Of course, it was only a dream," said John. "But what do you suppose made me dream such a thing?"

"You're loony, I guess," answered Frank, and he winked slyly at Tom.

When breakfast was over and the dishes washed, the tent was taken down. The dory was loaded, and the voyage up the river was continued. After two hours of hard labor the rapids below Deer Lake were reached. Here the water was so swift that further progress in the boat was out of the question. Accordingly, the dory was made fast to a tree on the bank, and, with rods in hand, the boys proceeded along the shore.

Fish were plentiful, though all were small, and as it was no trick to land the little trout,

the boys stopped fishing when they had caught enough for luncheon.

"I'd like to try for a salmon," said Tom, while the boys were eating. "We haven't got any salmon flies or hooks with us, though, have we?"

"I have one," answered Fred.

"May I borrow it? Just for the fun of it, I'd like to make a cast or so up the river in one of those big pools."

"If you did hook one of any size, you couldn't land him with that little trout-rod, I'm afraid," said Fred.

"Probably not, but I'd like to try it if you don't mind. I don't think there is much chance of hooking one, anyway."

"If we're going back to the *Spray* to-night, we ought to start before it gets too late, you know," called John, as Tom started toward the bank.

"I won't be gone over an hour," replied Tom confidently.

"I'd like to see Tom with a twenty-pound salmon on the other end of that line," remarked Fred a few minutes later.

"You can't tell. He might get one like that," said Frank. "Tom's a pretty fair fisherman, you know."

"I doubt if he'd fall off a rock when he had hooked a two-pound trout, anyway. How about that, Frank?" laughed John.

"Two pounds, nothing!" retorted Fred. "That trout weighed five pounds if it weighed an ounce."

"And by to-morrow it'll weigh five and a half, I suppose," said John.

It was a lazy day, and the three boys sat on the bank and talked and teased one another. A stranger might have imagined, if he had chanced to overhear their noisy words, that they were angry at times, but such was never the case. They knew one another far too well for anything so foolish as that to occur.

Meanwhile, Tom was having an exciting time.

CHAPTER XXIII

TOM'S CATCH

After a walk of twenty minutes Tom came to what he considered a pool that at least appeared to be promising. Whether or not there were any salmon in it he had no idea. Salmon were caught frequently in the Humber, and, so far as he knew, this pool looked as if it might be an ideal spot for them.

The hook and fly had been attached to the line, and Tom made ready for a cast. The pool was perhaps a hundred feet long, and at its head Tom took his stand.

At the first cast the hook was seized. With a whirl and rush the line went sizzling off to the farther end of the pool. Tom was so completely taken by surprise that he scarcely had presence of mind to keep his line taut.

The rod bent double as back and forth across the pool raced the great fish. Twice it leaped

clear out of the water in an effort to shake loose the hook that held it, but to no avail. Tom was trembling with excitement as he saw the size of the salmon. It must weigh twenty pounds, he thought.

For at least a half-hour the rushes continued. The light trout-rod was not strong enough to enable Tom to reel in very much, and all he could do was to hope that at length the fish would become tired out. There seemed to be but little chance of this, however, and the fight began to appear almost hopeless.

Suddenly the fish became quiet. Was it beginning to be exhausted, after all? Tom reeled in slowly and carefully, until he could see the salmon in the water almost at his feet. But how was he to land it? The net was not nearly big enough, and he had no gaff.

Tom dropped the rod and seized the line in his bare hands. Perhaps he might lift the fish clear of the water and swing it upon the shore. But he speedily discovered that this was not to be, or at least not yet.

With a rush the fish was off again. The line tore through Tom's fingers and cut almost to

the bone. But the excited boy still clung to his line. Hand over hand he pulled in again, until once more only a few feet of his line were out.

If the hook would only hold its grip! The struggles of the fish slowly became weaker and weaker. Tom's hands were cut and bleeding, but the excitement made him ignore the pain. He still clung to his line as if for dear life, and with luck he believed that he would yet be successful.

Undoubtedly, the fish was tiring. The fight it had made had taken much of its strength, and now the huge salmon was lying quietly in the water just offshore. Slowly and carefully Tom took in every inch of line he dared, until not more than ten feet were out. To swing the fish on to the shore he feared would be too great a strain on the hook and line, a fact which caused him to adopt another plan.

In spite of the salmon's quietness, Tom was not tricked into believing that he had finally won the fight. The fish was just below him in the water, and Tom suddenly decided to try a daring plan. He held the line tight in his left

hand, and with his right he made a grab at the fish. Right by the gills he caught it and held on with all his strength.

Fortune favored him, for he caught the fish just where he had intended. He was in the water up to his waist now, and the contest was sharp and at close quarters. The fish was struggling desperately, but Tom now had gripped it with both hands. He strengthened his hold and then, with one supreme effort, hurled his prize clear out of the water and upon the shore.

There it lay, flapping about on the rocks, while Tom scrambled quickly after it and, with a few well-directed blows from a large stone, soon put an end to its struggles.

Tom laughed aloud from sheer joy. He had caught a salmon after all, and just think how he had accomplished the feat! What a story it would make! The rod and line were collected and then Tom picked up the fish and hurried off to show his prize to the other boys.

He met Fred just as the latter was starting from camp to look for him.

"Where have you been, Tom?" Fred called

Tom hurled his prize clear out of the water

as soon as he caught sight of him. "We want to start back, and it's getting late."

Tom made no answer. He simply held up the salmon for Fred's inspection.

"Where did you get that fish?" Fred gasped in astonishment.

"I caught it."

"How? Where?" Fred asked question after question and, apparently, was more excited than the fisherman.

Tom related the whole story of the fight to Fred, but when they came to the place where Frank and John were awaiting them, it all had to be told over again. The other boys were nearly as excited about the fish as was Tom and manifested almost as much pride in its capture.

"Let's hurry back to the *Spray* as fast as we can, and put it on the scales!" exclaimed John.

"And just think what fine eating it will be!" said Frank.

"Stop thinking of your stomach for a minute, will you, Frank?" shouted Tom. "I don't know whether I'll give you any of it or not."

"We'd better start," broke in John. "Every-

thing is in the boat, and we ought to be moving along."

The return trip down the river was uneventful and most pleasant. The current was so swift that steering was the only work required of the boys. They took turns at this, and just as night was coming on they arrived at the mouth of the river. A short row brought them to the *Spray*, where Bud was expectantly waiting for them.

"Glad to see you back again, boys!" he exclaimed. "It's been quiet with you all gone."

"Well," said Frank, "we caught all the fish in the Humber, so there was no use in staying there any longer."

"I suppose you did," replied Bud soberly. "I don't believe you brought any back with you, though. Fellows that catch so many fish never do."

"We brought only one," said Fred. "One of the kind we used for bait. Tom, show the skipper that minnow."

Tom held up the salmon for Bud to see.

"Say!" exclaimed Bud, "where did you get that fish?"

"Tom caught it," replied John proudly.

"Good for Tom!" Bud cried. "How much does he weigh?"

"That's what we want to find out," said Tom. "Are the scales handy?"

Bud quickly produced them from below and speedily it was seen that the salmon weighed seventeen and three quarters pounds.

"When did you catch him, Tom?" asked Bud.

"This noon."

"Well, when he was fresh out of the water he probably weighed two pounds more than this. That's a fine salmon."

Bud had to be told all about their trip. The story of how the seal had scared Fred pleased him greatly, and if he could have heard about the "rescue" accomplished by two of the boys, he would have been even more delighted. Tom and Frank, however, had decided that they "would never tell."

CHAPTER XXIV

AMONG THE ICEBERGS

Bright and early the following day the *Spray* started on her way again.

"Tom caught the big fish, all right," said Fred, "but I expect to be the one to shoot the big caribou."

"You are wrong, Fred," remarked John, shaking his head as he spoke. "I am the one who will do that."

"Perhaps you are both wrong," said Tom. "Who knows but that I shall carry off both prizes?"

"You don't stand a chance!" broke in Frank. "You know, Tom, it's nearly impossible to catch caribou in your hands, and that's the only way you seem to be able to do things. You've all noticed that I am not in the habit of boasting, but you'll soon see who is the mighty hunter in this party. It won't be any one of

you three, either, for my middle name is Nimrod."

"You hate yourself, don't you?" asked Fred.

"Not at all," replied Frank calmly. "I am merely stating a fact."

"I advise you all not to talk too much," said Bud. "It might happen that none of you will get a caribou. Such things have happened, you know!"

"We like to talk, skipper," laughed Tom. "You mustn't pay too much attention to what we say, for we don't mean half of it."

"I know you don't," Bud replied. "Anyway, I hope you do get some deer, and there is no reason why you shouldn't. There is certainly plenty of them on the island."

"I wrote to Port Saunders for those two guides you recommended, Bud," said John. "They'll be there, all right, won't they?"

"You can count on them. They are both old friends of mine, and if you mentioned my name, you may be sure they'll be waiting for you."

"When do we arrive at Port Saunders?" asked Fred.

"Late to-night, if we're lucky. You can spend to-morrow getting ready and then start out the next morning."

"There's the entrance to Bonne Bay," observed Bud shortly after luncheon. "There is fine fishing up some of the branches, and it's the prettiest place on the west coast."

"I want to hunt," said Fred. "We have had some good fishing, and now I want to go out in the woods with a gun."

"You don't hunt these caribou in the woods," said John.

"No," replied Fred scornfully. "I suppose you go out in a canoe and spear them, don't you?"

"Don't be silly, Fred," said John. "I'm not trying to 'stuff' you, but I've always heard that at this time of year the caribou are out on what they call the 'barrens.' Isn't that right, Bud?"

"It is," said Bud promptly. "The deer are now out in the open where the flies ain't so bad. The way to go after them is to sit on a high hill with a pair of field-glasses. There are miles and miles of barrens, and you can see the deer feeding all around. When you find the one you like, you stalk it."

"That sounds easy," said Frank.

"Yes," sniffed Bud, "it does *sound* easy, but just wait until you try it. After you've walked six or eight miles to get where your caribou can't scent you, and then sneak up on him only to find that he's gone, it won't seem quite so easy."

"Not when you have a big rifle to carry, I guess," remarked Tom.

"How many guns you got?" asked Bud.

"Two big rifles, a shotgun, and a little twenty-two."

"Take 'em all along," advised Bud. "You'll want big rifles for the deer and the shotgun and the little rifle for ducks and grouse. You'll find lots of grouse up in the hills. Ptarmigan, they call 'em up here."

"What color are they?" asked Fred.

"Brown now, but in winter they turn white, just the color of the snow."

"This wind is getting cold," interrupted Frank. "I'm going to get a sweater."

"Look out there and you'll see why the wind is cold," said Bud.

All eyes instantly were turned in the direction

indicated by the skipper. Far ahead of them on the horizon appeared a multitude of white objects, some large and others small.

"What are they?" asked Frank excitedly.

"Icebergs," said Bud.

"There are hundreds of them!" exclaimed John. "Why haven't we seen any before?"

"This is the time of year when they drift in here," replied the skipper. "You see, they break off the edges of the ice-packs 'way up north when warm weather comes and drift to the south. Some of them are pretty big at times."

As the *Spray* drew near the bergs could be seen more distinctly. Beautiful objects they were, too. Some were pure white, while others had a shade of green in them. One great mountain of ice had an archway through the centre big enough for the *Spray* to sail under, but no one cared to risk such a thing.

"We are almost in the Straits of Belle Isle," explained Bud. "On the other side is Labrador, and in one place it is only about seven miles across from here."

"These icebergs are wonderful!" exclaimed

Tom slowly. "Just look at that big one! It's just like the picture in the geography I used to study, and I wouldn't be surprised if a polar bear should appear on the top of it at any minute."

The *Spray* was now completely surrounded by the ice. On all sides the glistening piles floated, ranging in size from thin blocks to huge bergs that seemed to be a hundred feet high or even more.

"A steamer had a queer experience with an iceberg up here last summer," said Bud. "It was a fast boat that carried freight from Saint Johns to places in Newfoundland and on the Labrador. One night she was steaming along at full speed when they ran plumb up on an iceberg. Luckily it was a very low one, and the bow was lifted right out of the water. She was going at such a rate that she slipped right out of the water up on the ice and then slid off again on the other side. First her bow was out of water and then the stern. It never hurt the boat a bit, neither."

"That makes a good story anyway, skipper," remarked Frank.

"Yes, and it's a true one, too!" retorted the skipper indignantly. "You can believe it or not, but it happened just the same."

"I say, we don't try anything like that, though," said John. "I'm afraid that our nerves and the *Spray's* hull might not stand it."

"We won't do it, if we can help it," observed Bud simply. "That boat didn't do it on purpose, you know. Icebergs is dangerous, though. Sometimes they roll right over, and there's always a chance that you may run into one. They make fog, too, when they begin to melt, and, as I told you, fire and fog is the things most feared by sailors."

"When do we get to Port Saunders, Bud?" asked John. "It's getting toward night now."

"We won't be there for six or eight hours yet and some of you better get some sleep now. I'll want two on deck all the time while we are in this ice. I don't care much about sailing in ice like this at any time and it's ten times worse at night."

They had passed the advance guard of the bergs, and, while the ice was not as thick as it

had been before, it still was plentiful. Night was rapidly drawing near. Bud was at the wheel, with Tom and Fred serving as look-outs.

CHAPTER XXV

THE BIG CARIBOU

THE night passed without any mishap, and when the first rays of the sun appeared the tiny village of Port Saunders, on the northwest coast of Newfoundland, was seen not far ahead.

Several icebergs still were floating in the near-by waters, one almost blocking the entrance to the harbor.

"I'm glad we're through *that!*" remarked Bud with a sigh of relief. "I can't say I'm very fond of the ice, and it is the low bergs that are so dangerous for a boat like this."

"They certainly are," said Tom. "Last night a huge cake of ice just missed our bow. If we had ever struck it, it would have punched a hole right through the side. I never saw it until it was too late, and it scared me half to death."

"We'll tie up to the customs-house wharf for

a while," said Bud as the *Spray* came into the harbor. "I'll go find your two guides and you all go to bed."

It still was early in the morning. No one had had much sleep the night before, as a constant anxiety about icebergs had kept all the boys awake. Consequently there was little delay now in getting into bed.

About noon all were up once more, and preparations for the big hunt speedily began.

Guns were oiled, blankets were aired, and all the cooking utensils were collected. No tent was to be taken, as the guides owned a log cabin in the heart of the caribou country. This was to be the headquarters, and excursions were to be made from this central point.

Bud brought the guides aboard the *Spray* in the afternoon, and both were introduced to the young hunters. One of the men was short and slight and the other tall and raw-boned. Their clear gray eyes showed that they were used to doing things, and the boys liked them at once.

The tall man was Henry Newman and the shorter one "Alec" Robinson.

"We'll call for you at four-thirty in the morn-

ing," said Henry. "Be all ready and get a good sleep to-night. You'll find walking over hills and through the woods harder work than sitting on a boat."

"How far is it to the camp?" asked John.

"Eighteen miles," said Henry. "We'll get to the camp to-morrow afternoon and start hunting at daybreak the next day."

"Say, Henry," said Alec, "do you think we'll get a shot at the Old Fox?"

"Can't tell. We might see him and we might not. Probably not. Has anybody seen him lately?"

"Jim Reynolds saw him last week when he was up to the barrens. Bigger than ever, he says."

"Who is the Old Fox?" Tom inquired.

"The Old Fox," answered Alec, "is a deer that people has been trying to shoot for over five years. He is the biggest caribou in this part of Newfoundland, and he is easy to tell because he has a patch of white hair on his right side. They call him the Old Fox because he is so hard to get close to. Parties has gone out from here declaring they wouldn't

come back unless they brought his head with 'em, but he's still roaming the hills. I seen him once and he sure is a whopper."

"Is there any chance of our seeing him, do you think?" inquired Fred eagerly.

"I'll shoot him for you, Fred," suggested Frank dryly.

"If one of you does shoot him you'll be the envy of hundreds of people, I can tell you," said Henry. "Men has come all the way from New York just to get that deer, and, though some has seen him from a distance and a few have had a shot at him, none has ever hit him, so far as they can tell."

"He's still there, anyway," observed Alec.

"We'll be ready when you arrive in the morning," called John as the two guides went ashore.

"All right," answered Henry. "Be sure to get lots of sleep, for you'll have an awful hard day to-morrow."

"I certainly would like to get the Old Fox," exclaimed Tom after the departure of the guides. "Just think of the reputation we would have if we should kill him!"

"Well," said Bud, "you've got two of the

finest guides in the business. If there's any caribou in the barrens they'll take you to 'em, though I don't know much about this Old Fox."

"That's the one I'm after!" exclaimed Frank. "I believe I'll get him, too! I have a feeling."

"The only feeling you ever had was hunger," remarked Tom. "You're too fat to get over those hills and I was just thinking it might be well to leave you here while we're gone. I'm sure I don't want to have to carry you back."

"Huh!" retorted Frank. "You just keep your eye on your Uncle Frank. He'll not only carry himself, but he'll carry the head of the Old Fox home with him, too."

"That's the way to talk, Frank!" Bud exclaimed. "You show these fellers up! You can do it, and I wish you all the luck in the world."

"Thank you, skipper," said Frank, as he bowed low. "I shall do as you say."

Immediately after supper every one except Bud went to bed. He was to be left behind with nothing to do for a week except smoke, sleep, and eat, so that he was not in need of rest at the time.

Everything was made ready for an early start, so that when Henry and Alec called in the morning there was no delay.

Breakfast was cooked and eaten by five o'clock, and fifteen minutes later the hunting party departed from the *Spray*. Packs were strapped upon the shoulders of each and the guns were carried in their hands.

Bud stood on the wharf and continued to shout his good-bys.

"Don't forget the Old Fox, Frank!" he called. "I'm trusting in you."

"Thank you, Bud," answered Frank. "No need to worry."

A few minutes later the party came to the edge of the woods, and one by one entered and disappeared from sight.

CHAPTER XXVI

THROUGH THE FOREST

"WHEW! This is hot work!" gasped Fred after the hunters had been gone on their way about an hour.

"I should say so!" responded Tom, who was just ahead of his companions. "Henry was right; this is harder than sitting in a boat."

The two guides were in the lead, and behind them came Tom, John, Fred, and Frank in the order named. The two men had set a very swift pace, for it was their purpose to go as far as possible before the day became too warm.

They seemed tireless and were not bothered in the least by the rough walking. With the boys, however, it was different. The heavy packs and guns were a big load and hampered their movements. Consequently, they found much difficulty in fording the frequent brooks and climbing over the rocks and the fallen dead trees.

About eight o'clock they saw a small lake not far ahead of them. As they came closer a series of sharp reports abruptly broke in upon the stillness which rested over the region.

"What's that noise, Alec?" asked John.

"Beaver."

"Beaver!" said John in astonishment. "I never knew they made a noise like that."

"They're sitting on the bank, and when they hear us coming they jump into the water, and that noise you hear is the slap of their tails when they land. They have big, broad tails like paddles, you know."

As the party came out upon the shore two beavers on the opposite side of the lake hit the water with a crack and a splash and then swiftly disappeared from sight. Several big mounds of earth and sticks gave evidence that the beaver were abundant in the little lake and all along the shore; trees had been felled and logs dragged down to the water.

"I'd like to see some of these beaver near by," said Tom.

"You won't, though," answered Henry. "Them is awful shy animals."

"Let's start on," suggested Alec. "We have a long way to go yet, and we shall strike the tuckamore in a minute."

"The what?" asked John.

"Tuckamore," repeated Alec. "You'll know it when you see it, and you'll never forget it either, I'll bet. Come on!"

The march was resumed, and after the boys had skirted the lake they once again entered the woods. The trail they were following was very faint and there was no beaten track. Fallen trees were lying across the path, brooks and streams had to be crossed on logs, and much of the way lay through swamps.

It was a hard test, and the boys soon discovered that they were not in the best physical condition for this work. Neither were they used to this method of travel, and often Henry and Alec would stop and wait for the others to rejoin them. The two guides seemed to be always fresh, but they expressed no surprise because the boys were unable to keep pace with them.

When the party entered the woods on the farther shore of the lake they found the going

harder than before. What seemed like young spruce trees, shoulder-high, made their course doubly difficult.

The trail, also, was overgrown, and it was nearly as much as the boys could do to force their way along it. The branches of the overhanging trees were thick and tough, and so heavy was the growth that it required nearly all of one's strength to get through. Heavy packs and only one free arm made matters much worse for each hunter.

"What do you think of the tuckamore?" called Alec from the front.

"Is this the tuckamore?" replied Tom. "Well, if it is it's the worst thing I ever got into. How long does it last?"

"About a mile more."

"I'm about exhausted," gasped John. "This is like trying to walk in deep water with your hands and feet tied."

"Hang to it!" called Henry. "We'll stop for lunch and a rest as soon as we get to the other side."

More than an hour was required to cover the next mile. Every inch of the way was agony

to the leg-weary and sweltering boys, and at times it almost seemed to them that they could not go a step farther.

"This hunting business is not what it is cracked up to be," groaned Fred. "I wish I had stayed on board the *Spray*. I'm so tired right now I feel as if I should drop."

"I can't stand it much longer either," joined in John. "I'm just about dead. Hunting is not so wonderful as it appears when you read about it."

Tom, too, was faltering and confessed that he would not be able to endure the strain and struggle much longer.

Frank, however, was still enthusiastic.

"What's the matter with you fellows?" he called cheerily. "You're a lot of 'sissies.' I'm tired myself, but you notice I'm not quitting. Stick to it! We'll soon be out of this, and to-morrow you can all watch me shoot the biggest caribou in Newfoundland."

"What's the matter with you, I'd like to know?" exclaimed Tom. "I never thought you had it in you! Anyway, I'm not going to let you make a monkey of me just yet."

Frank's ridicule spurred on the others, for they had all regarded him as the least athletic of the party, and here he was the only one in the band who was not complaining.

At last they came out on the farther side of the tuckamore. A halt was called, and the two guides prepared a meal of bacon, tea, and bread. The boys sank to the ground almost exhausted, and had scarcely enough ambition left to sit up and eat the food that had been made ready for them.

"The worst is over," said Henry. "We have practically no more woods to go through, and you'll find the walking from now on fairly easy."

"Thank goodness for that!" sighed John. "How many more miles is it to the camp?"

"About seven miles," answered Henry. "We've gone a good deal more than half-way, you see."

After a rest of two hours the journey was resumed, and the walking certainly became easier. There still were a few hills to climb or to go around, but they were slight compared with the tuckamore. Low bushes and moss

covered the ground and blueberries were growing in abundance on every side.

"These are wonderful!" exclaimed Frank as he scooped a handful of the berries from a low bush. "Just see how thick they are!"

"I never saw such big ones either," said Fred as he, too, helped himself.

"These berries certainly do help a lot," continued Frank. "You know we have had practically no fruit at all this summer, and I'm getting tired of canned food."

"Try these bake apples," suggested Alec. "These are better yet."

"I should say so," agreed Tom as he ate one of the pink-and-yellow berries that looked something like a blackberry and that were almost as abundant as the blueberries. "I never tasted or heard of these things before."

"They're the finest berry in the world," said Alec, "and you never tasted anything just like them."

As the boys advanced along the trail they helped themselves to the fruit. The walking now was easy, and before they realized it they arrived at their camp, which was situated in

the midst of the forest and about a hundred feet from the shore of a small lake. It was built of logs and, although rough, it was comfortable. Inside were benches along the walls, and a couple of rude bunks also had been built in the sides of the room.

It was only about five in the afternoon when the party arrived at the camp, but supper was speedily prepared by the guides, and soon afterward everybody turned in so that they all might be up at daybreak the following morning.

CHAPTER XXVII

STALKING

It was scarcely daylight when Alec roused the sleeping boys the following morning. The two guides already had been up for some time, as the odor of wood smoke and frying bacon attested.

All four boys were stiff and sore as a result of their strenuous labors of the preceding day, and consequently getting up did not appeal to them very much. A plunge in the lake helped matters considerably, however, and after a hearty breakfast they all felt more ambitious.

"That stiffness will soon wear off," said Alec. "You'll find that after you've walked a mile or so this morning you'll be as good as ever and probably better."

"Yes," agreed Henry, "and in two more days you'll be able to walk the feet off Alec and me."

"Everybody ready?" asked Alec shortly after

the meal was finished. "We want to get moving as soon as we can, so as to be up on the hills in plenty of time."

No time was lost in preparation, and in a very few minutes the expedition once more was under way. Quite a heavy fog covered the landscape and made it impossible for the young hunters to see far in any direction.

"How about this fog, Henry?" queried Tom as they left the camp behind them. "We can't hunt when it is like this, can we?"

"No," answered Henry, "but this fog ain't going to last. You'll find it all burned away before the sun has been up very long."

Henry's prediction proved to be correct, for when the party emerged from the woods, a short time later, the mist already had disappeared to a large extent. Here the band separated.

Tom and Fred went with Alec, while John and Frank accompanied Henry. Alec's party bore off to the right, and Henry and his two charges departed in the opposite direction. Each party was provided with a pair of field-glasses and both planned to take their position on the top of some commanding hill. They

were to meet again that noon at the camp. Afternoon was bad for hunting, the guides said, and if they were going to get caribou that day, morning would be the time.

There were two big rifles with each division. Each of the guides carried one, while the boys had two among them. The guides were not to shoot until the boys had each bagged a deer; so there were guns sufficient for every one.

Henry, Tom, and Fred selected a hill not far distant and were soon sweeping the surrounding country in every direction with their glasses. Tom looked, and then Fred looked, but not a sign of caribou could they see. Finally Henry took the glasses, and after a few seconds of close inspection of the near-by country he handed the glasses over to Tom.

"Look down there," he said as he pointed to a place on the hillside.

Tom followed his directions but soon returned the glasses to Henry. "I don't see anything," he said.

"Well, there are six deer down there, whether you see anything or not!" explained the guide calmly.

"Quick! Let me look!" cried Fred, at once greatly excited. "I see them!" he exclaimed after he had looked long at the spot to which Henry directed his attention. "There's a big buck, three does, and two fawns."

"Let's get started! Quick!" urged Tom. "They may go away if we don't hurry."

"Wait a minute. Wait a minute," cautioned Henry. "The point is this. There is only one buck there, and there are two of you. Of course, you each want to shoot a buck; so what do you want to do about it?"

"We'll toss up to see who has first shot. Does that suit you, Fred?" asked Tom.

"I'm agreeable. Perhaps we won't get a shot anyway."

"I know that," Tom continued, "but it's just as well to be prepared beforehand. I'll spin this penny and you call heads or tails."

"Tails!" called Fred.

"Tails it is," said Tom. "You get first shot, and if you miss, then I can shoot. We only want the buck, don't we?"

"That's what I think," answered Fred. "Are the deer still there?" he asked anxiously

of Henry, who was still peering through the glasses.

"Yes, and we'd better get started. We have to make a long détour and come up the wind to them, you know."

The hunters started at once. The caribou were at least two miles distant from them, and it might be necessary to walk five in order to get within range. The wind was not strong, but it was blowing from their direction toward the grazing deer, so that the boys were compelled to make a wide circle and approach the unsuspecting animals from the opposite side.

Keeping the position of the deer always in mind, they hastened toward the place they were seeking. Henry took care that a hill or strip of woods should be between them and the caribou at all times, and no word was spoken as the two boys followed the course of their guide.

For an hour they walked, until Tom and Fred began to worry lest their game should escape them, but neither dared say anything to Henry, who evidently understood all the details of what he was doing.

Excitement spurred on the boys, but they

were beginning to tire under the fast pace they were making, when suddenly Henry raised his hand. All three instantly came to a stop. Not far ahead of them was a strip of woods, and Henry pointed to it as he beckoned the boys to come closer to him.

"The deer is right on the other side of them trees," he whispered. "We've got to go through these woods, and don't neither of you make a sound for anything! Follow me!"

Once again they started. Slowly and carefully they entered the woods, and, keeping close to Henry, they noiselessly picked their way among the trees. The woods were not more than three hundred yards wide, but to the boys it seemed to be miles across the intervening strip.

Henry stopped suddenly.

"Look!" he exclaimed in a low voice as he pointed to a place in front of him.

Peering from among the trees, the boys plainly saw, about two hundred yards from the place where they had halted, the outlines of the six caribou they had first discovered from the hill-top.

Crouching low, the hunters cautiously and slowly made their way almost to the border of the woods. The deer were grazing quietly, seemingly unaware that any danger lurked near by. The does and fawns were busily cropping the moss and grass that grew abundantly on every side, while the big buck frequently raised his head and sniffed the air. Apparently he was suspecting nothing, however, for he soon returned to his grazing.

Fred stepped on a twig, and at the slight noise that followed the animals all started and instantly turned their heads in the direction from which the sound had come.

The hunters held their breath, and it seemed to the boys that, even if the caribou did not see them, they must hear the beating of their hearts, so loudly did they pound.

After what seemed an interminable time, however, the deer returned to their feeding, though the buck still turned his head at frequent intervals.

"Now's the time," whispered Henry. "They are a little worried and soon may move on."

Fred raised his gun slowly and tremblingly

Fred raised his gun slowly and tremblingly

to his shoulder. His hand was shaking in his excitement, but at length hesucceeded in steadying his nerves, and then, taking careful aim, he fired.

CHAPTER XXVIII

A SOLITARY HUNTER

THE big rifle made a tremendous noise, and when the smoke cleared away it was seen that all six of the deer were making off at full speed.

"You missed him, Fred!" exclaimed Tom, and he instantly raised his gun to his shoulder.

Before he could fire, however, the big buck which was in the rear stumbled and fell.

"You got him! You got him!" cried Henry, as excited as his companions.

Instantly all three broke from the woods and started swiftly toward the place where the caribou was lying. He had rolled over upon his side and was still.

"He's as dead as a door-nail!" exclaimed Henry. "Look here! There's where the bullet hit him."

A stream of blood running from the ani-

mal's neck showed that the bullet had broken his back and that the buck was indeed dead.

"A fine shot, I call that," said Henry. "No man alive could have made a better."

"I congratulate you, Fred," added Tom as he extended his hand to his friend. "You are a real hunter."

"It's a fine animal, too!" continued Henry. "I've seen bigger, but this fellow is no pygmy, I can tell you."

Fred was beaming with pride. It was the first time he had ever hunted big game, and to have had such good fortune was more than he had anticipated. He grinned, also, as he recalled how in reality he had aimed at the body and not at the neck. The kick of the gun had deflected the bullet and hit the caribou in a place at which he had not aimed. This was knowledge that he planned to keep to himself, however, and he smiled modestly as Tom and Henry heaped their compliments and congratulations upon him.

"How are we going to get him back to camp?" asked Fred.

"Carry him, of course," answered Henry

promptly. "You didn't think he would walk, did you?"

"No, I didn't," laughed Fred. "But he looks pretty big to carry."

"Three of us can manage him all right," said Henry; and he set to work at once preparing the body of the buck for the trip back to camp.

The guide tied the dead animal's back feet together and also his front feet. Then, going a little way into the woods, he cut a stout young sapling and stripped the branches from it. Returning to the place where the excited young hunters were awaiting him, he thrust the pole between the front and hind legs of the deer so that when they raised it to their shoulders the caribou hung from it head downward.

"You see," explained Henry, "it won't be hard to manage him. Two of us can carry the deer and the other can take the rifles, and we can keep changing around so that no one will get tired."

The procession speedily departed for the camp, with Fred and Henry carrying the deer and Tom in charge of the guns. The little twenty-two rifle had been brought with them

so that in case they should see any grouse or ptarmigan, they might provide for their dinner by securing some of them.

It was six or seven miles from the place where the caribou was secured back to the camp and nearly three hours were consumed in covering the distance, though it was not yet noon when they arrived and the other party as yet had not returned.

Henry started in at once to dress the animal, with Fred an interested watcher. Thirty-nine points the buck had in his horns, which was said by Henry to be above the average, though many carried even more than that number.

Tom had wandered into the woods in the rear of the camp to see if he could secure some grouse for dinner. A half-hour later he returned with five.

"Why," he explained to Henry, "it is the easiest thing in the world to shoot them! I scared up a bevy, and all I had to do was watch closely the trees in which they 'lighted. Then they would sit still and wait for me to shoot them."

"They are stupid that way," Henry agreed,

"but they're fine eating and I'll start in to cook them right now. Are you two boys hungry?"

"Hungry!" exclaimed Fred. "Why, I could eat the horns off that caribou, I am so hungry."

At this moment the other party arrived at the camp. They were empty-handed and pretended to be very jealous when they saw Fred's fine buck hanging to a limb of a tree just outside the camp.

"We saw a bunch of deer," explained Alec; "but by the time we got near to where they had been, they were gone."

"We'll get some to-morrow, though," said John confidently. "Who shot this one? Fred or you, Tom?"

"Fred did, and I want one myself. I don't believe that I could finish up a caribou in such short order as Fred did, though. He made a wonderful shot."

"I should say he did! 'Bout the best I ever see," agreed Alec.

"What's that you're cooking?" asked Frank abruptly. "I am as hungry as a bear and whatever that is, it certainly smells good to me."

"Grouse that Tom shot," answered Fred.

"Say, you two are regular Nimrods, aren't you?" exclaimed Frank. "One of you kills a big buck with one shot, and the other gets five grouse. How many shots did it take to kill those five birds, Tom? One?"

"No, ten," laughed Tom.

"Dinner's ready," announced Henry at that moment, and no urging was needed to make the young hunters instantly heed the welcome summons.

The five grouse were quickly reduced to clean bones, and the fried potatoes and tea and biscuits that Henry had prepared also rapidly disappeared.

"What time is it, John?" asked Fred after they had finished eating.

"Quarter of one."

"It certainly seems later than that," said Tom. "We've done so much to-day it seems as if it must be nearly evening."

"Yes," said John, "but do you know that we left the camp here at half past four this morning? That's pretty early, you know."

"Venison for supper, Henry?" inquired Frank.

"Of course," replied the guide. "We won't

be able to eat half of what you are all going to kill, so we might as well do our best and start in right away."

"When Frank shoots the Old Fox we'll have plenty, all right," said Tom, and he winked at the others seated about the improvised table as he spoke.

"Yes, and you'd certainly be surprised if I did shoot him, I guess," replied Frank stoutly.

"You are right, Frank! We would, indeed," answered Tom demurely.

"Give me a rifle, and I'll go and kill him right now for you," exclaimed Frank.

"What are you talking about?" said John. "You're trying to fool us, I guess. You don't think you can go out and find him sitting under a tree waiting for you this afternoon, do you?"

"Of course I don't. Seriously, though, I think I will take one of the rifles and take that boat down on the shore there and row around for a while."

"Go ahead," yawned Tom. "I think I'll take a nap for a while. I don't understand where you got all your ambition from, Frank. You never used to be this way."

"Well, you all think I'm a 'dub,'" retorted Frank. "At least, you have made remarks to that effect upon divers and sundry occasions. Now, I'm going to prove to you that you are wrong. I don't mean to say I'll shoot the Old Fox or anything like that, but I do want a caribou head to take home and I'm not going to miss any chances."

"Don't go off the lake, Frank!" warned Alec as, rifle in hand, the seeker of the Old Fox started toward the boat. "You might get lost, you know."

"I'm just going to drift around the lake awhile," Frank called back. "I shan't be gone over a couple of hours."

"Is there any chance of his seeing any caribou this afternoon, Henry?" inquired Tom after Frank had departed.

"Not much," replied Henry. "But you never can tell. Sometimes the deer swims across this lake."

"Well, I hope he does get one," said John. "I don't believe he will, but he certainly would have the laugh on us if he should be successful, wouldn't he?"

Soon all became quiet about the camp. The two guides were busily engaged in skinning and dressing Fred's caribou, while the three boys talked for a time and at length fell asleep.

About an hour or so later Henry suddenly stopped work, standing with his hunting-knife poised in one hand.

"Say," he said in a low voice, "did you hear a rifle-shot?"

"I thought so," answered Alec. "Yes," he exclaimed, "and there's another!"

CHAPTER XXIX

THE OLD FOX

Both guides instantly leaped to their feet.

"What do you suppose he's shooting at?" asked Henry in a low voice.

"I don't know, I'm sure," Alec replied. "He may have seen a deer, you know."

"He fired twice."

"That probably means that he missed the first shot, and the chances are he missed the second, too."

"Do you think we ought to go to look for him?" said Henry.

"How can we go? He's got the only boat and there isn't much chance of our finding him by walking around through the woods."

"That's true. I guess all we can do is sit here and wait for him to come back. He'll be here fast enough if he's shot a deer, for he can't

bring it in alone; and if he hasn't shot anything he will be back pretty soon, anyway."

"You're right," said Alec. "All we can do is to sit here and wait for him. If he's got a deer, I don't believe we'll have long to wait, either."

Alec was correct in his surmise. Before many minutes had elapsed they heard some one crashing through the near-by bushes, and in a brief time Frank burst in upon them. He was completely out of breath and was pale as a ghost. The three sleepers were awakened by his noisy entrance, and all instantly sat up in surprise at Frank's unexpected appearance in camp.

Frank was so excited and breathless that it was a full minute before he could reply to the volume of questions which were hurled at him.

Finally he regained his composure, and his first sentence threw the camp into a turmoil.

"I've shot the Old Fox!" he gasped.

"What!" exclaimed everybody in chorus.

"I shot the Old Fox," repeated Frank, striving to speak in a more matter-of-fact manner.

"He was swimming across the lake and I shot him."

"What do you mean? What are you talking about? How do you know it was the Old Fox? Where is he now? Did you kill him?" These and a rapid fire of similar questions were heard on every side and by almost every one at once.

"He's dead, all right," said Frank. "He's lying in the woods down by the shore about a mile from here. He's a monster, and I know it's the Old Fox because there is a patch of white on his right side! I didn't know it until I'd shot him, though."

"Let's go see him!" exclaimed John.

"It's too late now," said Alec. "It's nearly dark, you see, and we wouldn't have time to get him here to-night. Wait till morning."

The boys agreed reluctantly, and it was decided to wait until early the next day before they should go after the Old Fox. Every one was excited at the thought that Frank had really secured the famous caribou. The two guides were elated beyond measure; for, though they had had nothing to do with the actual shooting, it was a member of their party who

had done it, and this fact would be a great feather in their caps for years to come.

"Tell us how you did it, Frank," urged John. "Are you positive it was the Old Fox?"

"Of course I am," Frank retorted blandly. "From the description Henry and Alec gave me, I can swear that I've made no mistake."

"Wait till we get a big fire started," said Henry. "Then we will all sit around it, and Frank can tell us how he shot the most famous deer in Newfoundland."

A great pile of wood speedily was collected and a roaring fire was soon blazing. When some coals had been collected a huge birch log was thrown upon them, and the blaze lighted up the trees and the cabin almost as well as if the glow had been that from an electric light. The warmth thus furnished was most welcome, too, for the night was cold.

The hunting party took seats near by, and when they were comfortably settled in their places on the ground Frank began his story.

"I started out to row around the lake in an aimless sort of way with no real thought that I was going to see anything to shoot at. I kept

close in by the shore and had reached the other end of the lake. I had seen no game and had almost forgotten that I had a gun with me. I was behind that point on the opposite side, 'way over yonder almost at the head of the lake. You know where it is, Alec?"

"Yes," said Alec. "I know it well. There is a cove there."

"That's the place!" exclaimed Frank. "I was drifting around in that cove and had just decided that I would start back to camp. I rowed around the point, and right there I almost ran into four caribou swimming across the lake. They were coming from the opposite side, but when they saw me they turned and started back again.

"My heart nearly jumped out of my mouth, I was so excited, but I had sense enough to follow them. I noticed that the bull was a monster, and I can tell you I put every ounce of strength I had into those oars. The deer swam pretty fast, but I caught up with them."

"Did you shoot him when he was in the water?" asked Fred.

"No, I was afraid that if I killed him out in

the deep water he might sink, so I just kept behind them. They were swimming for all they were worth, but I kept right with them, and just as they started out of the water I fired."

"Did you hit him?" exclaimed Tom.

"Of course, I hit him," laughed Frank scornfully. "I was only about ten yards away and couldn't have missed him very well if I'd tried. He staggered, but kept right on out of the water and was about entering the woods when I fired again. The first shot would have killed, I think, but I was taking no chances, and I didn't want to lose him."

"When did you see the white patch?" inquired Alec.

"Not until after I had shot him once. I shot him in the neck the first time, and then, as he came out of the water, I could see the white patch of hair on his right side and I almost jumped out of the boat with excitement and surprise. As soon as I realized that it was the Old Fox I fired again, for I can tell you I wanted him pretty badly. The rest of the deer disappeared into the woods and were gone in about two seconds. The Old Fox only got up

the beach and to the edge of the woods and then collapsed.

"I was ashore by that time, and when I saw he was dead I can't tell you how I felt. I felt sort of sorry for him, he was such a wonderful animal. But I was proud, too. To think that I should be the one to succeed where so many others had failed! Perhaps it wasn't a very sporty way to do it, but it was effective."

"It was all right," said Henry. "You are a very lucky boy and you will be a hero when we get back to Port Saunders, I can tell you."

"I certainly feel proud," replied Frank. "Now I can hardly wait to get all you people down there to see him."

"Well," said Alec, "let's all get to bed and be off for an early start in the morning."

CHAPTER XXX

A RUBBER MATTRESS

To say that the boys were excited at the thought of having secured another big caribou would be stating the fact mildly. Every one heartily congratulated Frank again and insisted that he was deserving of the highest praise, though he himself modestly maintained that the whole thing was luck.

"You said before you started that you intended to shoot the Old Fox," said John.

"I know it," answered Frank, "and I don't quite understand it yet; but I have had a feeling right from the start that somehow or other I should be the lucky one."

"It certainly is peculiar," exclaimed Tom. "Anyway, Frank, you nearly walked our feet off coming through the tuckamore the other day, and you deserve something good for keeping up so well."

"Frank," Fred interrupted, "it looks as if we two were the hunters in this crowd."

"That's right. I don't see any caribou that any one else around here has shot, do you?" laughed Frank.

"Well," exclaimed Tom, "I don't see any caribou that Frank has shot, either. For all we know, he may have made up the whole story and have never even seen the Old Fox."

"I did not make up the story!" cried Frank hotly. "I shot him, and in the morning I'll prove it to you, if you won't take my word for it."

"I wasn't serious, Frank," said Tom. "Of course, I believe you. I'd believe you if you said you'd shot the Old Fox and all his relatives and friends. I was trying to get a 'rise' out of you, and I guess I did."

"You know," observed Alec, who had just overheard the last part of the foregoing conversation, "there is no such animal as the Old Fox."

"What!" exclaimed all four boys at once.

"There is no such animal as the Old Fox," Alec repeated.

"What do you mean?" gasped Frank. "Do you mean that the whole story was a fake and that it was just a coincidence that I shot a big caribou that had a white patch on his right side?"

"I mean that there is no such animal as the Old Fox," said Alec once more. "There was once, but now Frank has shot him."

"Whew!" exclaimed Frank. "You almost scared the wits out of me! I guess I'd better turn in before the rest begin to tease me, too."

Alec was immensely pleased at his own "joke," and his laugh was loud and long. When the boys found out that he was joking, every one heaved a sigh of relief. They had been very proud to think that one of their number had bagged the Old Fox, and then to be told that no such animal had ever existed would have been a great disappointment to all.

"Look here, Tom," said John, as they were preparing to roll themselves up in their blankets for the night. "You and I are the only ones that haven't shot a deer. Shall we go with the boys to look at the Old Fox in the

morning or shall we try to do a little hunting on our own account?"

"I would like to have a head and some horns to carry home with me," Tom answered soberly.

"All right," went on John. "Let's get Henry to take us shooting in the morning. The other three can handle the Old Fox, I guess. Will you take us, Henry?" he added, turning to the guide as he spoke.

"Certainly I'll take you," promptly replied Henry. "I'd like to see the Old Fox, though."

"I've a plan," suggested Tom. "We three will get up very early, long before the others do, and we can stop and take a peep at him on our way. How does that strike you two?"

"First rate," said Henry. "All I wanted was to see him for a minute just as he is. I once seen him from a distance and I've often heard people tell of him who'd seen him."

"That suits me, too," agreed John.

Frank explained the route to be followed, and it was agreed that John, Tom, and Henry should start early from the camp, while the other three, a little later, would go out and bring back the Old Fox with them.

The fire by this time had died down into a bed of glowing coals. The night was cold, and the young hunters decided to sleep in the open air, as close to the embers as possible. Each man and boy wrapped himself snugly in his blankets and lay down near the burning logs.

The six members of the party made an almost complete circle about the fire.

Frank, who usually had an especial care for his own comfort, had brought with him a light rubber mattress. There was a valve on one side of this mattress and the whole thing was inflated by blowing air from the mouth into the valve.

As Frank was blowing up his couch, Tom nudged Fred and drew him to one side, where he whispered in his ear. Whatever it was that he said seemed to please both boys greatly and they both burst into gales of laughter.

"What are you two laughing at?" asked Frank.

"Nothing much," said Fred as he slyly nudged Tom.

"Well, if it's any joke on me, don't play it, that's all," replied Frank. "I've had enough excitement to last me for one day."

"Why, Frank," exclaimed Tom in mock seriousness, "you don't think we would play any joke on you, do you? We esteem you too highly for that."

"That's all right," said Frank. "I'm suspicious of you two, and I don't like the way you looked at me and laughed."

"Don't bother about them," said John. "They are jealous of your rubber mattress and try to get even by laughing at it."

"They'd better be jealous of it," replied Frank. "It's wonderful, and I can't lie on it much longer and stay awake. You see, if I didn't have this to sleep on there would be a big rock right in the middle of my back. As it is now, I'd never know it was there."

"Good night, everybody!" cried John. "Don't forget to call us in the morning, Henry."

"I won't," said Henry.

In a very few minutes every one around the fire was in a sound sleep—that is, all but two were asleep. Fred and Tom were lying one on each side of Frank, and neither one of them was sleeping.

As soon as the regular and heavy breathing

of the other four showed that they were in a sound sleep, Tom raised himself to a sitting position. Almost immediately Fred, too, sat up.

Silently and very carefully they put their blankets aside and approached the place where Frank was lying. Frank was a heavy sleeper, and the great amount of hard exercise he had indulged in recently made him sleep even more soundly than usual just now.

Fred carefully pulled back the blankets from the motionless figure of their friend and so careful was he that Frank scarcely stirred. Tom began to feel with his hands for the valve through which the air had been forced into the mattress.

When, after a long search, he found it, he unscrewed the cap and with a pin pressed down the plunger so that all the air soon escaped. The mattress in a brief time was flat, but still Frank slept on.

Tom and Fred quickly covered Frank with his blankets once more and without disturbing his slumbers. Both chuckled with glee as they themselves now noiselessly prepared to go to sleep.

"Say, Tom," whispered Fred, "did you know there's a big rock in the middle of Frank's back and that he can't feel it because he's sleeping on a rubber mattress?"

The two boys had trouble in restraining their merriment.

"He'll feel it in about half an hour!" replied Tom in a whisper. "Don't worry about that!"

CHAPTER XXXI

LEAVING CAMP

An hour later Frank awoke. Instantly he was aware that there was a big rock which seemed to be forcing its way right into the middle of his back and also that his mattress was flat.

That was a queer thing, he thought, and he wondered if there could be a leak in it. Suddenly he recalled the sight of Tom and Fred whispering together when he had been blowing it up the night before. Here was the explanation of the mystery!

At first he thought he would pay them back in some way and do it at once. Then, on second thought, he decided that that would be just what they naturally would expect, and he did not want to give them the satisfaction of knowing that he had been irritated.

His best revenge, he decided, would be to ignore them completely, and they must never know that he had even been awakened by their prank. He was stiff and sore, for a rock does not make the most comfortable bed in the world. Tom and Fred should never know that, though, if he could prevent it, he declared to himself.

Quietly he unrolled himself from his blankets and, taking great care not to disturb any one, he again inflated his mattress. Two minutes later he was sound asleep.

Almost before sunrise Henry was astir. He placed dry kindlings on the still smouldering fire, and was soon cooking breakfast for Tom, John, and himself.

In a few minutes he called the two boys who were to try their luck with him that day, and the food was rapidly disappearing when the others awoke.

"Is our breakfast ready?" eagerly inquired Frank. "I was too excited last night to eat, and now I think I could eat fried bark, I am so hungry."

"This is *our* breakfast!" retorted Tom. "And will you please keep away from it?"

"Just give me that one little piece of bacon," begged Frank. "I am weak from hunger."

"I'll give you nothing," said Tom. "John, keep him away from there," he added, turning, as he spoke, to his friend.

Frank was standing directly over Tom and was pleading with him for a "bite." Alec was already preparing breakfast for him and for Fred, but Frank insisted that he could not wait. Tom was threatening him with various forms of dire fates if he dared to touch any of the food, but still Frank stayed close to him. Finally, the young hunter reached forward, and, seizing a piece of bacon in each hand, one from Tom's plate and one from John's, he stuffed them both into his mouth.

"Lynch him, John!" cried Tom. "Throw him into the lake! Help me catch him!"

Frank started to run as soon as he had seized the food and both Tom and John instantly followed him in hot pursuit. Around and around the clearing they went, all three in gales of laughter and soon quite out of breath.

Finally, Tom got almost within reach of the fugitive, and, throwing himself through the air,

he brought Frank to earth with a tackle as good as ever he had made on the football field.

The boys came down with a thud. Frank, who was a few feet in front of his pursuer, landed on the rubber mattress, while Tom's face was ground into the dirt and he came up looking like a black man. Fortunately, neither one was hurt.

"Now, you see!" Frank exclaimed triumphantly. "You've all been teasing me about my pneumatic bed, and here is another proof that it is a wonderful thing."

The two guides and Fred had been interested spectators of the proceedings and were laughing heartily at the climax.

"It's a good thing it was blown up," Alec remarked to Frank.

"Well, I blew it up last night, you know, and I hadn't let the air out of it yet."

Frank tried to appear unconscious of any implied reference in his remark.

Tom rubbed the dirt out of his eyes and glanced hastily at Fred. There was a look of astonishment on the faces of both boys, for had they not let all the air out of the mattress

the night before? And yet here it was blown up tight in the morning and no sign from Frank that he had ever found anything wrong with it.

"Frank, are you a wizard?" asked Fred.

"What do you mean by that?" replied Frank, doing his best to look innocent. He knew what was going through the minds of both Tom and Fred and he could see the expression of bewilderment on the face of each.

"Are you a wizard?" repeated Fred.

"No," replied Frank soberly. "I'm not a wizard, but I will admit that I'm an 'old fox.'"

"Come along, boys!" called Henry. "We ought to get started if we are going to take a look at the Old Fox on our way."

"I'm ready," said Tom. "How about you, John?"

"All right," responded John promptly, and the three quickly disappeared among the trees.

Alec soon had breakfast ready for Fred and Frank, and at last Frank's appetite was appeased.

"You don't suppose anybody or anything

would disturb my caribou during the night, do you?" he anxiously inquired of Alec.

"Not a chance of that, and there is no need of worrying. It is as safe there as if it was in a bank."

"I suppose that's so," said Frank, "but last night I dreamed that somebody was trying to steal his horns. I wouldn't lose them for anything on earth!"

"Well, I wouldn't have you lose them for anything on earth, either," remarked Alec. "If I thought there was any danger, do you suppose I would have waited till morning before bringing the carcass into camp?"

"Oh, I'm not really worried, but that dream made me a little nervous. Say," he continued, "won't Bud's eyes open when he hears that I shot the Old Fox?"

"He said you would, didn't he?" remarked Fred.

"Yes, but he didn't think there was any chance of it, I guess. Let's get started, Alec."

"If you've all had enough to eat, I'm ready," answered the guide and, a few minutes later, they started on their way.

Meanwhile, the other party was skirting the shore of the lake, following Frank's instructions as to how to reach the spot where the body of the huge deer had been left.

John was in the lead and was hurrying along as fast as he was able, so anxious was he to gaze upon Frank's prize. The other two were following more leisurely and, consequently, John was soon far in advance of them.

Gun in hand, he hastened along the shore. The walking was difficult except in places where there was a beach, but such places were infrequent and far apart.

At length John recognized, just ahead of him, the wooded point which Frank had described, and he knew that around the point was the spot where he should find the Old Fox lying. He quickened his steps and hastened on. Looking behind him a moment, he could see nothing of the other two hunters, but the heavy mist that was over everything at that time of day prevented his seeing very far in any direction.

Rounding the point, he came out into a little clearing, devoid of trees but full of huge rocks and boulders. Frank had said that behind the

largest rock they would find the Old Fox, and toward this John quickly made his way.

He was greatly excited and for some reason seemed to think he must be very quiet. He picked his way carefully and stealthily over the ground, his moccasin-clad feet not making a sound.

He reached the large boulder he had headed for and walked around it to the opposite side. There he uttered a cry of horror and his heart for a moment seemed to jump into his mouth, for standing not more than ten feet away from him was an enormous black bear.

CHAPTER XXXII

JOHN'S PRIZE

It would be difficult to say whether John or the bear was the more startled. Neither one had had the slightest idea that any other living thing was anywhere near.

The bear was sniffing about the carcass of the caribou that lay on the ground before him, and when John suddenly appeared he was too surprised, for a moment, to move. Then he suddenly turned and departed for the woods at his highest speed.

When John saw the bear running in the opposite direction his courage instantly returned and with it also his wits. Quickly bringing his gun to his shoulder, he fired at the retreating figure. At the first shot the bear seemed to hesitate but still kept going, though he ran with a limp.

John fired again and this time his aim was

It would be difficult to say whether John or the bear was the more startled

true, for the bear fell and, rolling over upon his side, lay still.

At this moment, Henry and Tom came running up to the scene. They were only a short distance away and the sound of the rifle-shot had brought them along at a greatly increased speed.

"What's the matter? What are you shooting at?" exclaimed Tom, almost breathless in his excitement.

"Look there!" answered John, pointing to the body of the bear. "I have just shot a bear."

Henry ran hastily right over to the place where the animal was lying, his gun ready in case of need.

"Be careful, Henry!" called John. "He may only be wounded."

"Wounded, nothing!" retorted Henry. "He's dead, all right!"

John was white and shaking in his excitement, for he had not yet recovered from the shock he had just received.

"Where did you find him and how did you happen to shoot him?" cried Tom.

All three had completely forgotten the Old Fox in the excitement of this new experience.

John recounted how he had come upon the bear by surprise, and how the bear had seemed even more frightened than he, and he had barely retained enough presence of mind to shoot.

"It's a good, big bear, all right!" said Henry, as the three hunters stood looking down at the carcass. "You boys is some hunters, I should say, and this here spot seems to be a lucky one! Let's have a look at the Old Fox."

The great deer was lying upon his left side, the white spot on his right flank showing clearly. He truly was a monstrous buck and was at least a third larger than the one which Fred had shot.

"That's the Old Fox, all right!" said Henry positively. "There's no mistake about that, and he is all they said he was. Did you ever see such a spread of horns?"

"He certainly is a wonder!" exclaimed Tom. "Frank will be a hero without any doubt, and it looks as if I were the only one who couldn't shoot anything."

"We've got this morning to try in," said Henry encouragingly, "and we'd better be moving. Are you ready to start, John?"

"I don't believe I'll go, if you don't mind. I think I'll stay here with my bear until the other fellows arrive and get them to help me carry him back to camp."

"All right!" said Henry quietly. "Suit yourself! Come along, Tom!"

"Good luck to you, Tom!" called John. "Perhaps you'll shoot an elephant."

"Don't jolly me," said Tom. "I feel very badly that I am the only one not to get anything, and this is my last chance."

"Make the most of it!" John shouted, and waved his hand as Henry and Tom disappeared from sight around the point of woods.

In a few minutes Alec, Frank, and Fred appeared, with Frank in the lead.

"What do you think of my caribou?" he shouted to John.

"He's a beauty!" replied John. "Henry thought him wonderful and I guess we all do."

"Where are Henry and Tom?" inquired Fred. "Why aren't you with them?"

"They went shooting," answered John. "I didn't think I'd do any more to-day."

"What's the matter with you?" demanded Frank. "You are grinning about something and I insist upon knowing what it is."

"Well, just walk over there and you will soon find out," said John, pointing to the spot where the dead bear was lying.

All eyes were turned in that direction, and with exclamations of wonder every one rushed to look at the bear. Once again John was made to tell how it happened, though this was no hardship for him. He dwelt with great detail on his meeting with the bear and the start it gave him.

"Whew!" said Frank. "I'd have been so scared I never could have raised my gun to my shoulder, to say nothing of having a steady enough aim to hit anything."

"Do you know, it's a funny thing," said John, "but as soon as the bear started to run all my courage came right back to me. Until then I was simply paralyzed with fear. When I saw that he was more scared than I was, why, then all my nerve returned."

"It's a good thing he wasn't cornered. He might have made for you then. How about that, Alec?" inquired Fred.

"Possibly," said Alec. "But, as John says, I guess he was the more scared of the two."

"Do you suppose he would have eaten the Old Fox?" exclaimed Frank. "If he had done that I think I could have killed him with my bare hands, I should have been so mad."

"He wouldn't have touched him," said Alec. "I guess he was just nosing around. Bears is awful curious animals."

Attention was divided between the caribou and the bear, and the story of each adventure was told and retold many times. Alec had brought the boat along, and at length both animals were stowed on board and, with Alec rowing, the trip back to camp was begun. John, Fred, and Frank walked along the shore and helped unload the cargo when they arrived at their destination.

Both animals also were dragged up to the cabin, and the three great trophies the boys had secured made the place look like a real hunters' camp.

Alec cut steaks from the caribou which Fred had shot and got them in readiness to be cooked for dinner. The three boys seated themselves near the guide, watching him and talking continuously of their exciting experiences.

It was almost noon when Henry and Tom appeared at the camp and both were empty-handed.

"Didn't even see a deer!" said Henry disgustedly. "Too much fog to see far, anyway."

"We saw hundreds of tracks that looked fresh," said Tom. "No caribou, though!"

"That's tough luck!" remarked Fred. "Don't you care, though, Tom! You caught the big salmon up the Humber, and you can't expect to get everything."

"No, I don't suppose I have any cause for complaint," said Tom, "but I certainly would have liked to get a caribou."

"I didn't get one either," observed John.

"No, but you got a bear, and that's a more difficult thing to shoot, as a rule, than a deer. They're much scarcer, aren't they, Henry?"

"Yes, indeed," said Henry. "There's not very many bears left in Newfoundland."

Alec and Henry spent the afternoon skinning the bear and cutting up the caribou so that the meat might be carried more easily when the young hunters should start back to the *Spray* the next morning.

"It'll take us two days to get back with all this load," said Alec.

"That's all right. I guess Bud won't worry about us," laughed John. "He'll be glad to see us and get some venison and bear steaks, too, I guess."

"You're right he will!" observed Henry. "I've known Bud a long time, and he can eat almost as much deer meat as he can cod-fish."

"If that's the case, it's a lucky thing the Old Fox is as big as he is," laughed Frank. "I wish my family could have some of the meat, too."

"When they see the size of that head and horns they'll forget about eating," suggested Tom. "Why, Frank, do you realize that you are the most famous man in Newfoundland?"

"He isn't yet," observed Fred. "But he will be as soon as people hear he shot the Old Fox."

"You are very kind to me," said Frank with

a low bow, "and I enjoy your company very much, but just now I am going to sleep."

"Don't sleep on any rocks to-night," advised Tom.

"If I do," said Frank, "there will be two cripples in camp to-morrow. They won't be John, Alec, or Henry either."

"How about yourself?" asked Fred.

"No, nor myself. I warn you not to monkey with the Old Fox to-night."

"Very well," laughed Tom. "If you threaten us this way we shan't dare to touch you."

Every one else also decided that sleep was what was needed most just then, and in a very short time all was still in the camp except for the heavy breathing of the sleepers and an occasional twig that snapped in the fire.

CHAPTER XXXIII

ON BOARD THE "SPRAY" AGAIN

THE following morning the packs were made up and the return journey was commenced. It had been decided to take two full days for the trip, if necessary, and as a consequence, there was no attempt at speed. The first night camp was pitched on the shore of the lake where the beaver lived, and early the next afternoon the boat was reached.

"Do you know," remarked Fred to Tom one morning on their way back, "that I have noticed a peculiar thing since we have been in Newfoundland, and that is that I haven't seen a single fat man."

"That's true," said Tom. "I hadn't thought of it before, but now that you speak of it, I can't remember that I have seen one either."

"Why do you suppose it is?"

"I don't know, unless it's because they take such a lot of exercise."

"They eat a good deal."

"Yes, they do, at times. But most of the people live on bread and tea, as far as I can see, and neither of them is very fattening."

"It has made a great impression on me," continued Fred. "You know, at home there are so many great, fat men and up here there aren't any. I believe it's due to exercise mostly, and I've made up my mind to exercise enough all my life to keep myself from getting so fat."

"That's a good scheme, but most people won't bother to exercise when they get to working, and they all eat too much."

"Not I!" said Fred promptly.

Bud was standing on the dock and rushed forward to meet the hunters as soon as he spied them.

"Glad to see you back!" he called. "I've been on the lookout for you all day. What sort of luck did you have?"

"Fine!" said John with enthusiasm. "Fine!"

"Come aboard and tell me all about it. Did

you bring back the Old Fox for me?" he inquired of Frank.

"Of course I did," said Frank. "Didn't I tell you I would?"

"You didn't, really?" exclaimed Bud in astonishment.

"Yes, he did," said Tom. "Frank is the greatest hunter that ever stepped on the shores of Newfoundland!"

The news spread like fire through the village that the Old Fox had been bagged by one of the boys, and a crowd soon collected to see the head and skin and hear the details of the story.

Frank was congratulated scores of times, and the natives listened in amazement to his account of the capture, which he was made to repeat for the benefit of every new arrival.

"These young men are real hunters, and no mistake!" said Henry. "They went at it in the right way and deserved good luck."

"That's the truth!" chimed in Alec. "The first day out from here they were soft and got tired out easy, but as soon as they got broken in a bit they was as good as we were."

"Yes, and if we was to start out again they'd probably tire us out easily," added Henry.

"Good shots, too," he continued. "You ought to have seen 'em drop those deer."

The guides were as proud as peacocks, and took even greater delight than the boys themselves in recounting their experiences. Bud was especially delighted that Frank had been successful. Frank was the favorite member of his crew, and he always resented the other boys teasing him.

Gradually the crowd thinned out until no one was left except the crew of the *Spray* and Henry and Alec. The two guides were to mount the caribou heads and also prepare the skin of the bear for John. The *Spray* was to sail in the morning and the two men soon made ready to go ashore.

Just before they left, John presented each with one of the big deer rifles. They both belonged to him and he had informed the other boys of what he intended to do. They were enthusiastic over this suggestion, for all had become very fond of their two guides.

To say that Henry and Alec were pleased

with their gifts would be stating the fact mildly. Words almost failed them, for never in their wildest dreams had they ever expected to be the owners of such wonderful guns. That they appreciated the gifts, however, was plainly evident, and their delight made the act a most satisfactory one for John.

Good-bys were soon said. The two men went ashore with the bear and caribou, which were to be forwarded to the United States, to the boys' homes, when the task of preparing the heads and skins was completed.

"It seems sort of natural to be back here, after all, doesn't it?" remarked Fred.

"It seems good to have you back, I can tell you!" said Bud. "It was getting a bit lonesome here without you."

"We're ready for a rest now," explained Frank. "We've been working very hard the last few days, and we must take time to recuperate."

"You'll get no rest here," said Bud. "We sail at daybreak to-morrow and when we get out among those icebergs it will keep everybody busy, I can tell you."

"Do you think there will be many?" inquired Fred.

"'Think'? I know there will be," replied the skipper. "You'll see plenty of them, all right."

To the boys it seemed as though they had hardly been asleep at all before Bud called them the next morning. Coming on deck they found the wind from the east and bitterly cold.

"No swim this morning!" announced Tom.

"I should say not!" agreed Fred. "This is certainly cold and I can't say I enjoy it."

Under Bud's orders, the jib and the jigger were hoisted, and when Fred and Tom had cast off from the dock the *Spray* swung out into the harbor, the mainsail was hoisted, and once again the yawl continued on her course for Labrador.

"Where do we go to-night, skipper?" asked Frank.

"Blanc Sablon," replied Bud. "I hope to get there, anyway. When you get to Labrador you'll see some real fish-flakes."

"You mean places where they dry the cod-fish in the sun, don't you?" John inquired.

"That's the idea exactly," said Bud. "They

have frames of wood with a sort of chicken wire strung between, and after the codfish are cleaned, they put 'em out on the flakes to dry in the sun."

"What do they do with them then?"

"Salt them and ship them to places all over the world. When we get to Battle Harbor you'll see schooners loading up. Boats come there for fish from almost every country on earth. How would you like to be a sailor and be away from home and all your friends for two years at a time the way some of those fellows are?"

"I don't want to be away as long as that," said Frank. "It's all right for the summer, the way we are, though."

"Yes," said Bud, "that's all right. You have nothing to worry about; but those fellows are not out for fun. It's all hard work with them."

"Icebergs ahead!" sharply called John from the bow.

Sure enough, a mile or more in front of the boat appeared a multitude of white specks, apparently gradually coming nearer.

"All right," answered Bud. "I see them.

I don't mind them either," he added in a lower tone to the three other boys, who were with him, "if we don't have a storm."

"Do you think we will?" asked Tom.

"I am afraid so. It looks bad off there and the breeze is freshening. You'd better have everything ready, anyway."

An hour later Bud called to all the boys. The yawl was among the icebergs and, while they were not so numerous as they had been before, there were still a good many directly in their course.

"Look here!" announced Bud when they were all together. "We're in for a blow, and a bad one, I'm afraid. I want every one of you to do whatever is asked of him, and I know none of you is going to lose his nerve. It may not be as bad as I think, but I want you all prepared, and if we keep cool we'll come out all right. I admit I don't like to be caught in a wind with a lot of ice around, and it's apt to be dark, too."

"You'd better lower the mains'l!" he ordered a few moments later as a gust of wind caught the *Spray* and heeled her over till the rail was awash.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE PLIGHT OF THE "SPRAY"

THE boys sprang to carry out the skipper's instructions and soon had the big sail furled on the boom. They were none too quick, either, for the wind was increasing in force every minute, while the waves were steadily mounting higher and higher.

It was bitterly cold, and the *Spray*, tossing among the waves, drenched the boys to the skin and the wind chilled them to the bone. The sky was dark and forbidding, while everything around them was in semidarkness.

Rain soon began to fall in torrents so that it was impossible to see very far in any direction.

"Take in that jib!" shouted Bud. "Here, you, Frank and John!" he called. "You two lower the jigger-sail!"

He was too late, however, for, as John and

Frank hastened to obey, a gust of wind caught the jigger and tore the canvas from top to bottom. The loosened part flapped for a few seconds in the wind and then was completely ripped off and carried away by the gale.

The boys' faces were white and set as with difficulty they made their way about the boat. The *Spray*, although now under bare poles, was still swept swiftly before the gale, while Bud seemed powerless to control her. All he could do was to cling as if for dear life to the wheel and try to keep the little craft headed straight before the wind.

Tom and Fred, crawling on hands and knees over the cabin on their return from the bow, were caught by a wave breaking over the boat and pitched headlong into the cockpit. Fred arose, his forehead gashed and bleeding from his contact with a sharp corner.

This mishap was scarcely noticed, however, even by Fred himself. The *Spray* was tossed about like a cork, and every time a wave broke on her it seemed almost as if she must go to pieces.

"Don't any of you go out of this cockpit!"

shouted Bud, his voice scarcely audible above the noise of the storm.

Tom helped the skipper hold the wheel, while the other boys sat huddled at their feet, clinging to whatever they could lay their hands upon. For hours they were driven before the gale, and no one had any idea of their location. Frank, sitting in the corner, thought of Bud's remark a short time before that people sailing as they were had nothing to worry about. Why had he ever taken this trip? He might have known they would all be drowned.

At that moment a huge iceberg loomed up out of the darkness and swept by them so close that it seemed almost possible to touch it.

The boys cried out in terror, but before they realized it that danger at least had passed.

"Keep down! Don't stand up! Do you want to be knocked overboard?" shrieked Bud.

Once more the young sailors cowered in the cockpit, too scared to move. In fact, it was almost impossible for them to move. The boat rolled so it seemed as if she would capsize, and undoubtedly she would have done so if it had not been for her heavy lead keel.

"This is awful!" shouted Fred in John's ear. "We'll never get out of this alive!"

"I don't see how we can," answered John. "The wonder is that we haven't hit something before this."

Hardly had he got the words out of his mouth when the *Spray* struck. There was a terrible jar and every one was pitched forward headlong. The boat seemed to shudder for a moment and then was still.

Bud was the first one to recover his wits, and he began giving orders at rapid-fire pitch.

"Here, you, get out the life-preservers!" he shouted to Tom. "You two see if you can't get that life-boat ready!" he directed Fred and Frank. "You come with me, John," he said. "We'll see if we can find a leak."

Every one hastened to obey, and in a very few minutes a life-preserver was strapped around each person. Bud and John found the *Spray* wedged in between two rocks and resting on a low reef. A hole had been punched in the bow through which the water was rapidly pouring.

"She can't last an awful long time here," announced Bud to the rest of his crew. "Did you get the life-boat ready?"

"The life-boat is gone," announced Fred.

"'Gone'?" demanded Bud in dismay.

"Yes. Washed away, I guess."

"This is a nice pickle," groaned Bud. "Here we are, caught like rats, and we'll be drowned like rats unless a miracle happens."

The faces of the boys were white and haggard. They realized just what they were confronting, but not one of them lost his nerve even for an instant, nor had they any idea of giving up.

"We'll get out of it, all right, Bud!" said Tom. "Perhaps we're just offshore and could swim, anyway."

"We can't see where we are. That's just the trouble," said Bud. "If she'll only last till morning we can get our location, perhaps."

"Hear that!" cried John as a huge wave broke with full force on the top of the cabin. The whole boat trembled with the impact, and it was evident that the *Spray* could not stand many more blows of such terrible force.

Frank and Tom had carried all the bedding and pillows up under the bow and had attempted to plug up the hole where the water was entering. Their efforts seemed to relieve the situa-

tion temporarily, but plainly the unequal contest could not long continue.

So tightly was the *Spray* wedged between the rocks that she rested fairly easily except for the incessant pounding of the waves upon her.

The crew were huddled in the cabin, which now had at least a foot of water in it. Every wave added to the amount, while from the hole in the bow came more and more each minute.

"What time is it?" asked Fred.

Frank's watch was the only one running.

"Four o'clock," he said.

"It ought to get light before long," remarked Tom. "With these life-preservers on, we stand a chance of making shore if it's not too far away."

"Unless we die of the cold first," suggested Fred gloomily.

Every one was drenched now and shaking with cold. But, as Tom had said, their only chance of escape depended upon the ability of the *Spray* to withstand the shocks until morning should come.

No one spoke. The boys and the skipper sat like five images, never moving except when

an exceptionally large wave struck and jarred the boat. Both masts were gone, snapped off at their bases.

An hour or more passed in this manner. Then an enormous wave struck with tremendous force upon the top of the cabin; there was a crashing and splintering of wood which followed and then a rush of water sounded all about their ears.

"It's all over," shrieked Bud. "Run for it!"

Fighting and forcing their way, every one made a dash for the deck. The companionway had been smashed by the water, and it was no easy task to gain the deck. All succeeded in getting there at last, however, but as soon as they had risen to their feet another huge comber burst upon them and one and all were tossed headlong into the furious waters.

CHAPTER XXXV

CONCLUSION

An hour later Tom was sitting upon a large rock on what he believed must be the coast of Labrador. The storm had ceased to some extent and it now was possible dimly to distinguish the near-by objects.

When he had found himself hurled into the water he had made no effort to help himself except to keep his head above the surface of the water. Wave after wave broke over him and he was carried along like a piece of driftwood. He had heard the pounding of the waves on the shore and had expected to be dashed to pieces against some rocky headland. To his surprise, however, he found himself borne into a little cove where the rocks were low and somewhat sheltered from the ocean.

He experienced no difficulty in making his

way to the shore, and at once he had set out to look for his companions, none of whom he had seen since they had all been hurled together from the deck of the *Spray*.

Rounding a rocky headland, he espied two people on the shore evidently working over a third person lying on the ground between them. To his great joy he discovered that the figures were Fred, John, and Frank.

John and Frank were rubbing Fred's limbs and doing all in their power to bring back his circulation, for he seemed to be almost exhausted.

There was a joyous meeting, and with Tom's assistance Fred soon recovered.

"Frank and I came ashore together," explained John in answer to Tom's question. "Then we discovered Fred floating just offshore. He was almost exhausted, and we had to go into the water again to help him out."

"We certainly are lucky to be here," exclaimed Tom. "But where's Bud?" No one knew nor had any one seen a trace of him.

"If Bud is lost I don't know what we'll do," moaned John. "We must find him, that's all."

"Suppose we all hunt for him along the shore, and incidentally find out if there are any houses here. We'll all get pneumonia unless we get warm soon."

All the boys were shaking with the cold and their teeth chattered continually. The four, unmindful of their plight, nevertheless set out along the shore, keeping a sharp lookout for Bud, but no sign of him was to be seen anywhere.

"There are buildings ahead!" abruptly exclaimed Tom, and instantly all four quickened their pace.

In a few minutes they came to the outskirts of a little settlement. They stopped at the first house and knocked. The door was opened by a man clad in boots, a sweater, and oilskins.

"What place is that?" inquired John.

"Battle Harbor," he said. "Where did you boys come from?"

"From the ocean," said Tom. "We have just been shipwrecked and barely managed to get ashore."

"Was there another man in your party?" the man inquired.

"Yes," exclaimed John eagerly. "Is he here?"

"No; but I saw some people carrying a man up to the hospital a little while ago. I heard he had been picked up in the water."

The boys did not wait for anything more to be said, and turning instantly, they all ran swiftly in the direction the man had indicated. In a few minutes they came to the building he had described as the hospital, and, sure enough, they discovered that Bud was inside and but little the worse for his thrilling adventure in the sea.

The hospital belonged to Doctor Grenfell, whose name was a familiar one to the boys. They had heard him spoken of as "the guardian angel of Labrador" and the man who took care of most of the sick people in the north. He was not at Battle Harbor at the time, however, having left a few days before on his annual summer cruise to the far north, healing the sick as he went from settlement to settlement and prescribing for all who needed his help.

The boys were quickly taken in charge by

the nurses, however, and when they had donned dry garments not one of them felt much the worse for his experience. Bud wept with joy at seeing them again.

"The *Spray* is wrecked entirely, John," he said simply. "There won't be nothing left of her by now."

"What do we care about the *Spray!*" exclaimed John. "We're all safe, and that is the only thing that counts."

"John, you ought to telegraph to your father, I think," said Fred.

"How can I? There is no telegraph office here, is there?"

"Of course there is! Don't you know that it was from here that Captain Peary sent all the news about his discovery of the north pole?"

"I'll take you to the telegraph office if you want me to," volunteered one of the attendants, and, promptly accepting his courteous offer, the boys immediately followed him as he led the way.

"Our families might read of a big storm up here and be worried unless they should hear that we are all safe," said Fred.

"That's right," quickly joined in Tom. "We ought to do it."

The hospital was filled with patients, and to those who were convalescing and were able to follow them the boys were compelled to tell their story many times.

In a few moments John returned.

"What did you say?" asked Frank.

"Here is the message," John answered: "'Big storm. *Spray* total wreck. All safe. What shall we do?'"

"That's all right," said Tom. "When ought we to get a reply?"

"Not before to-morrow morning," their conductor answered.

"Then let's all get some sleep. I, for one, am almost worn out. We're not used to being shipwrecked, you know," suggested Tom dryly.

Beds were provided by the generous and willing people in the hospital, and in a brief time the crew of the *Spray* was deep in slumber.

The following morning found the young sailors rested once more, and as soon as they had finished breakfast John hurried to the telegraph office for a reply to his message.

He returned in a short time, his face very long.

"Look at this," he said, holding out a slip of paper.

The other boys eagerly scanned it and read the following message: "Come home at once."

That was all.

"I guess they are all worried about us," said Frank. "It looks as if that telegram meant what it said, too."

"I hate to go and leave the *Spray* all smashed to pieces," said Tom soberly. "I had become very much attached to that boat."

"She's done for now, and we'd better be thankful we're not, too, I can tell you!" said John. "I guess my father won't miss the boat, or say a word about the loss of it, as long as we are all right."

"The steamer sails to-morrow, and there won't be another for two weeks," announced Fred. "I have just asked the doctor about it."

"That means we start to-morrow, I guess," said John promptly. "Bud, you'll come as far as St. Johns with us, of course?"

"I suppose so," replied Bud. "What will

your father say when he hears I wrecked the boat?"

"You didn't wreck the boat; it wrecked itself; and you needn't worry about anything. If we hadn't had you along we'd have been drowned long before this, anyway."

John's warm words seemed to pacify Bud somewhat, and, when the young sailor again had assured him that his father would not complain of the loss of the boat, Bud slowly regained his spirits.

"You know it won't be so bad getting home again," said Tom thoughtfully. "We've had a wonderful time; and just think of all the stories we'll have to tell!"

"Now that I know we have to go, I can hardly wait to get back to college and tell all the fellows about it," exclaimed Fred. "Which one of us do you suppose will have the best story?"

"Well," said Frank, a droll expression appearing on his face as he spoke, "you know who killed the Old Fox, don't you?"

THE END